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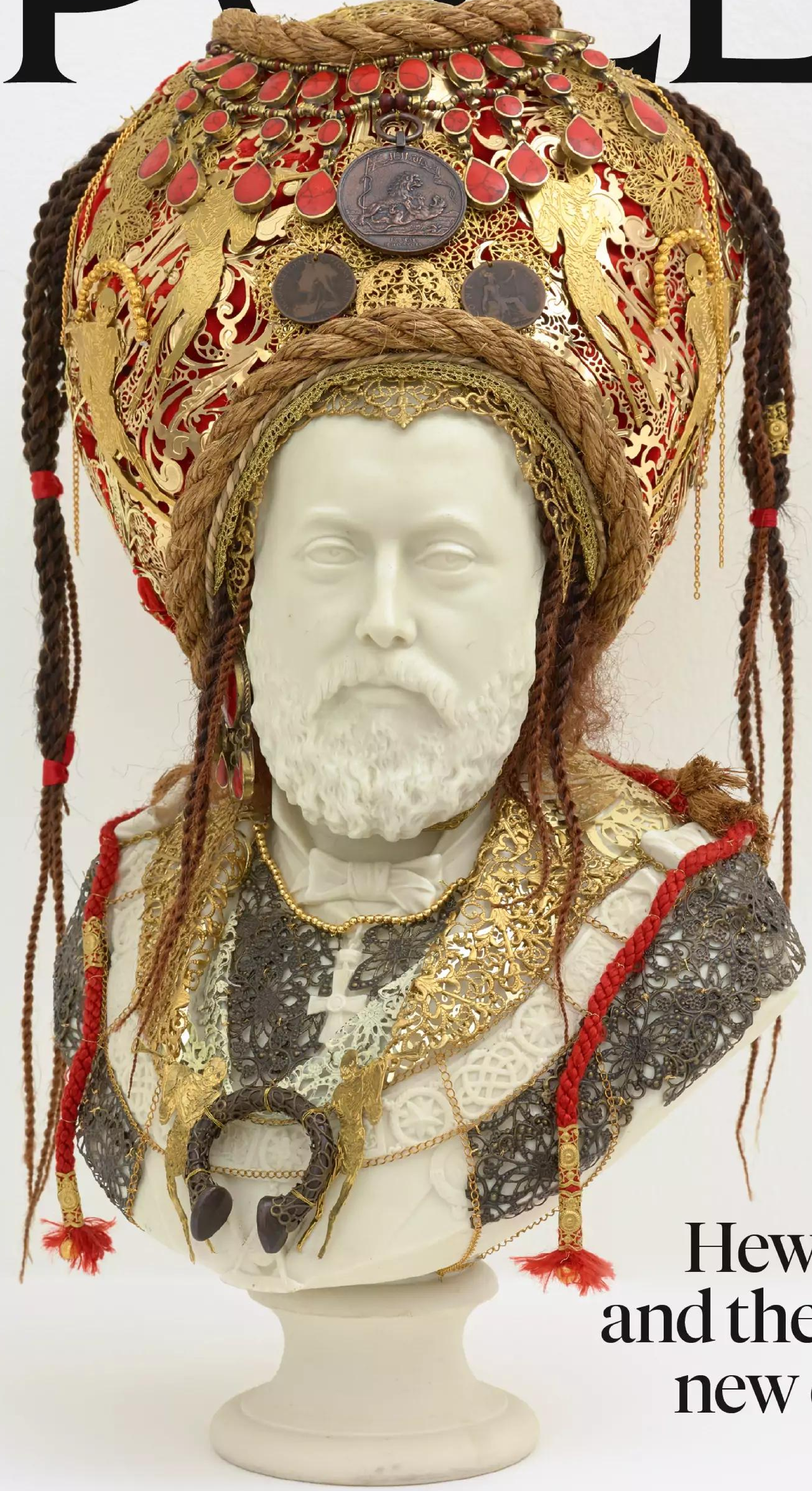

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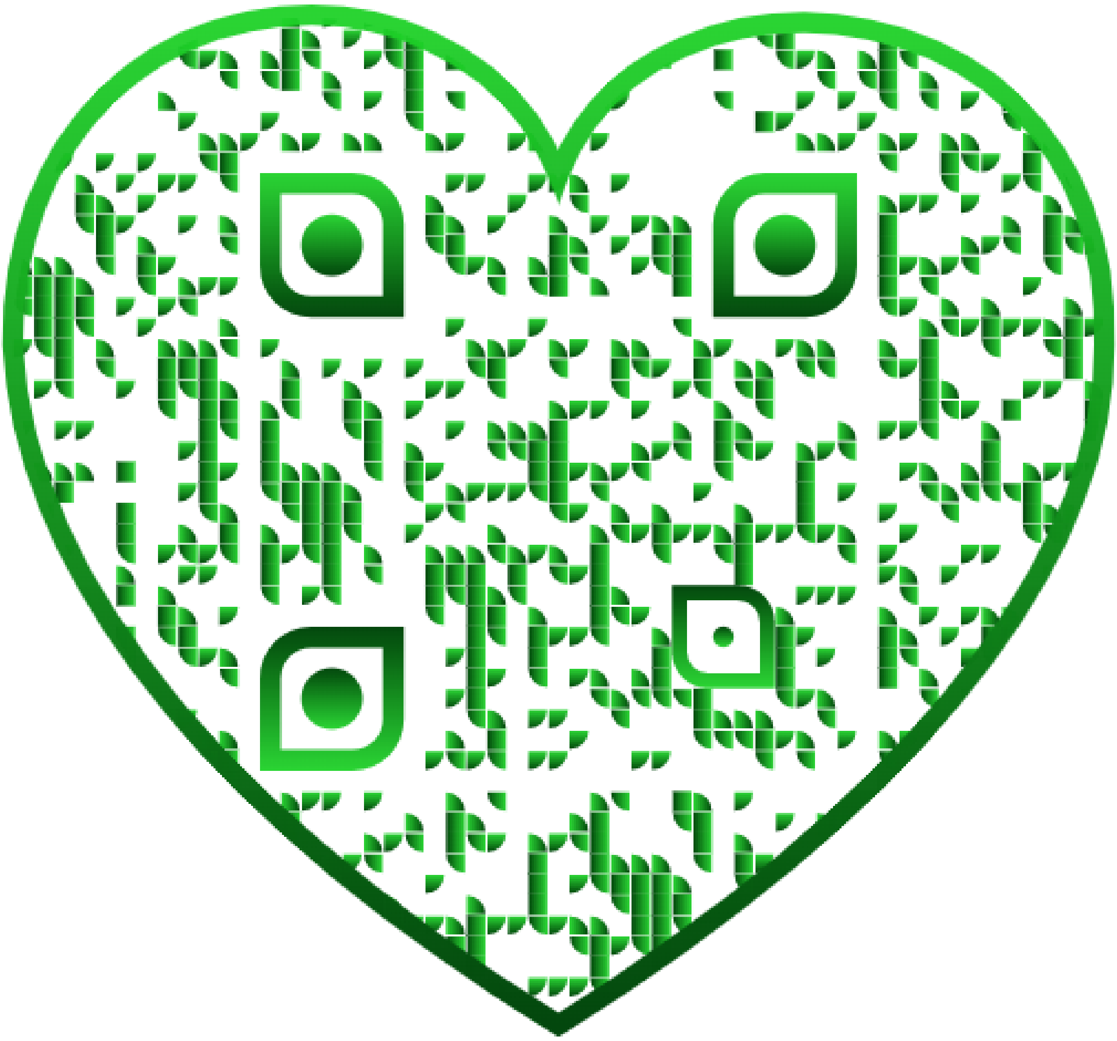

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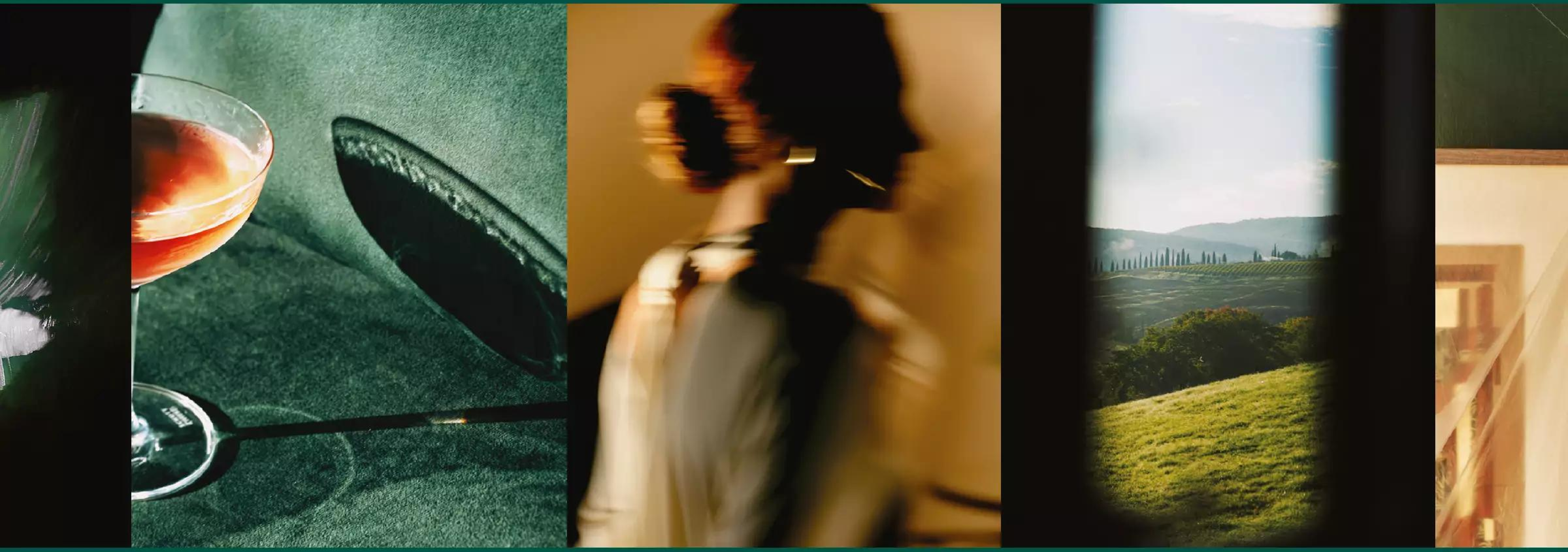

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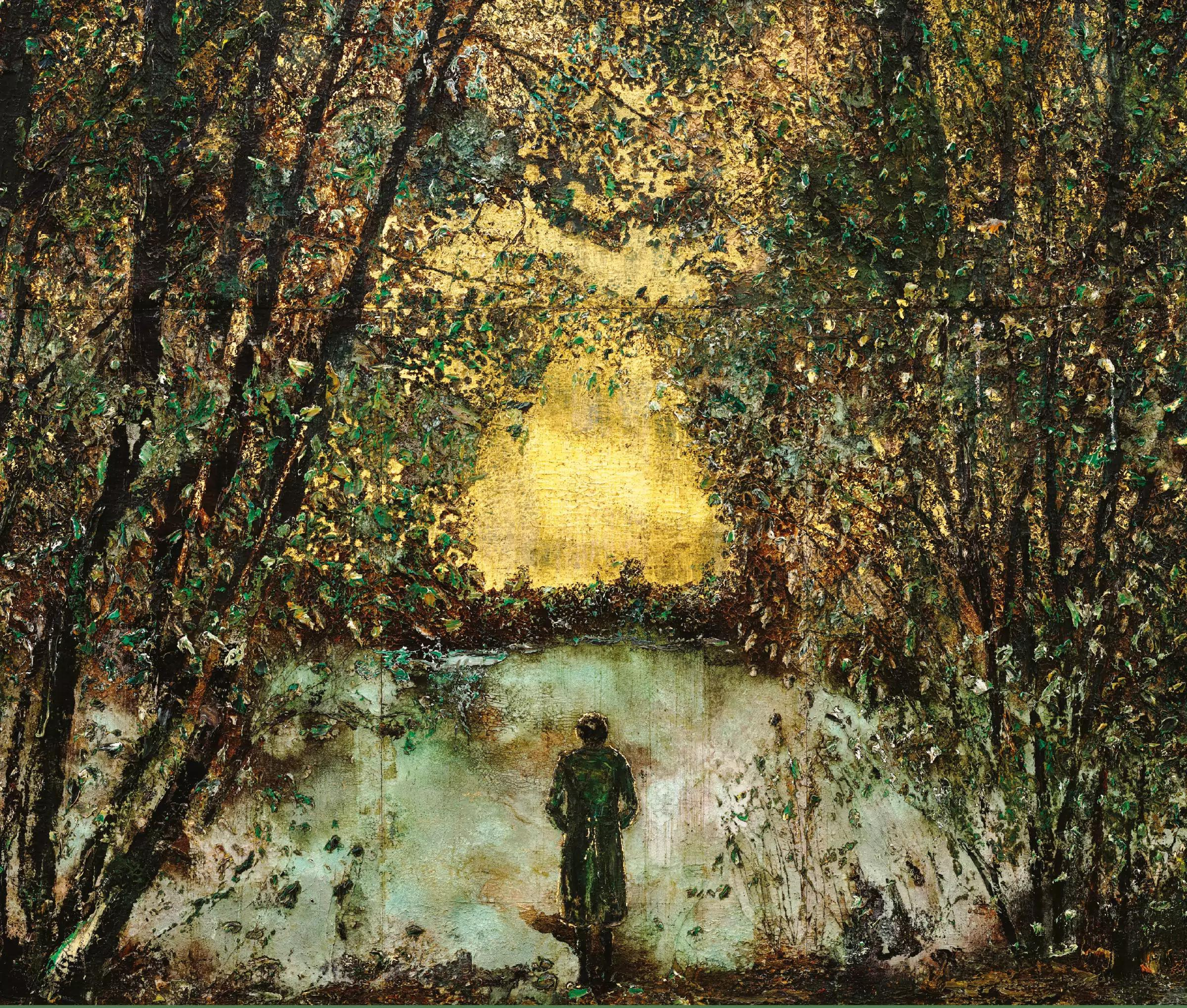

Anselm Kiefer
Becoming the Sea

October 18, 2025–January 25, 2026

Anselm Kiefer: Becoming the Sea is presented with generous support from the William T. Kemper Foundation, Jeanne and Rex Sinquefield, and Gagosian.

Anselm Kiefer, German, born 1945; *Anselm fuit hic* (Anselm Was Here)(detail), 2024; emulsion, oil, acrylic, shellac, gold leaf, and sediment of electrolysis on canvas; 30 feet 10 1/16 inches x 27 feet 6 11/16 inches; © Anselm Kiefer, Collection of the artist and courtesy Gagosian 2025.309
Photo: Nina Slavcheva

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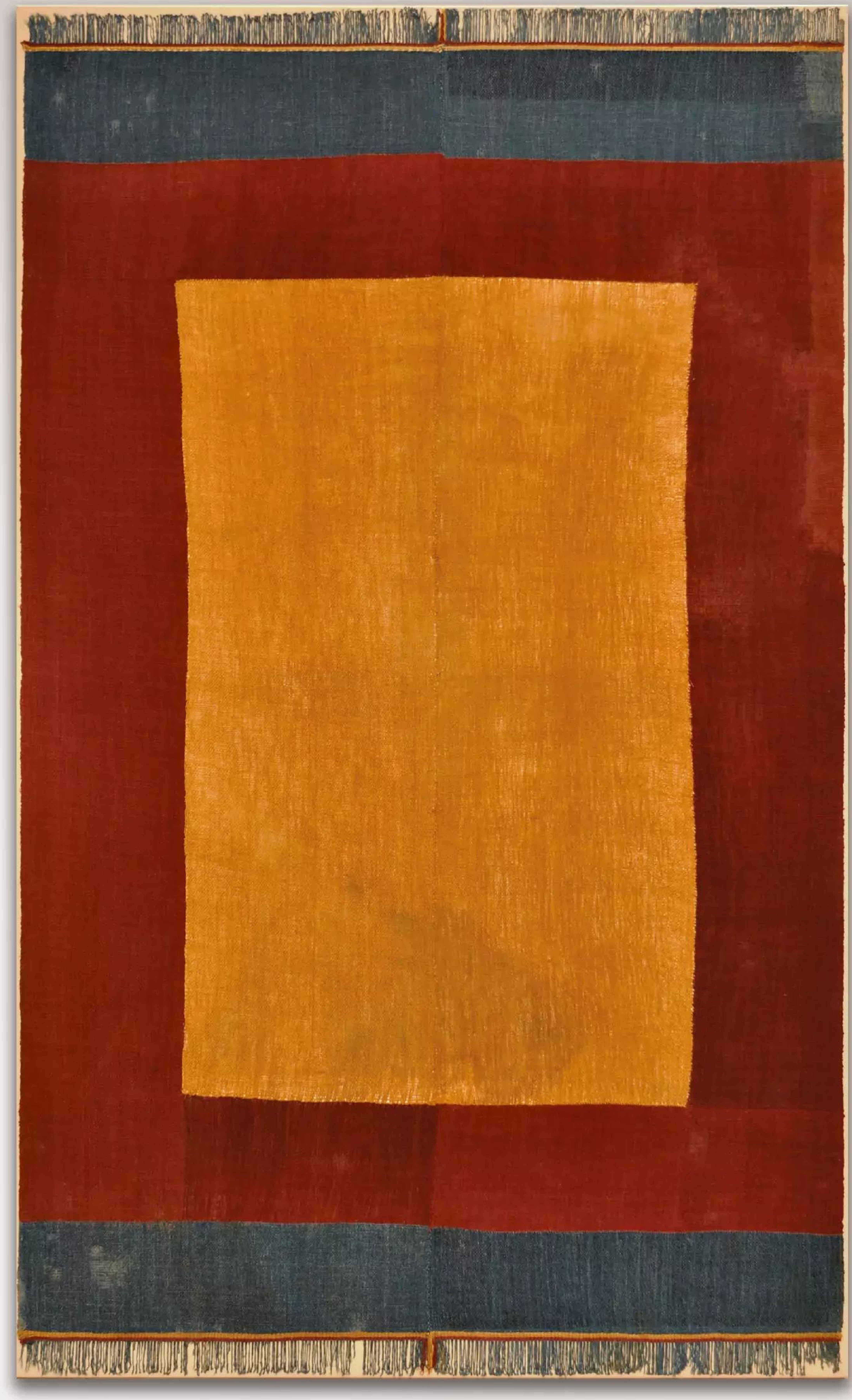

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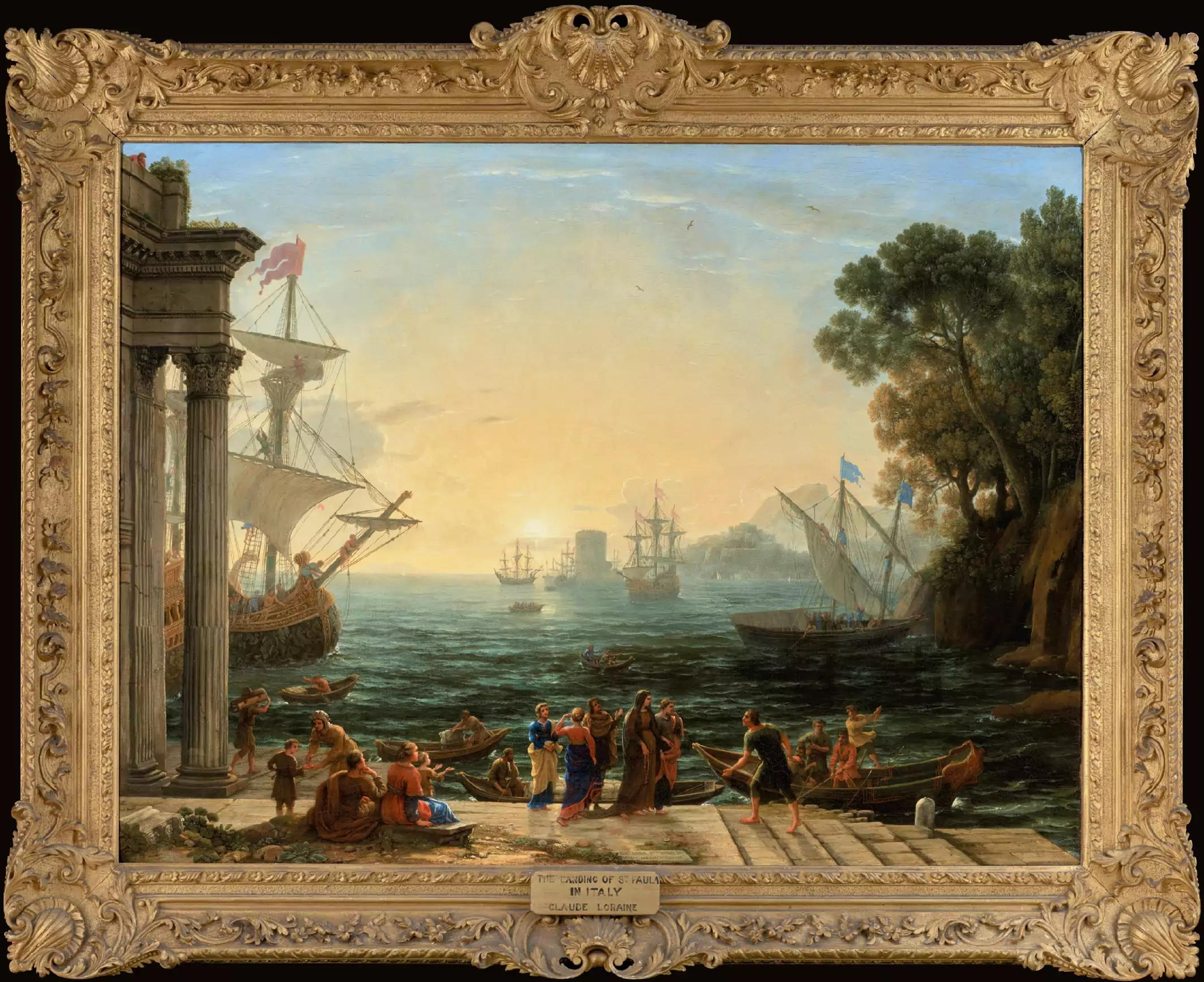
Vincenzo Catena, 1506–1531, *Portrait of the Doge, Andrea Gritti* (detail), 1523–31 © The National Gallery, London

FRIEZE MASTERS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IN ITALY
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Cree-Metis Nation, Red River Valley, Manitoba, Canada
Early 19th century - acquired 1832
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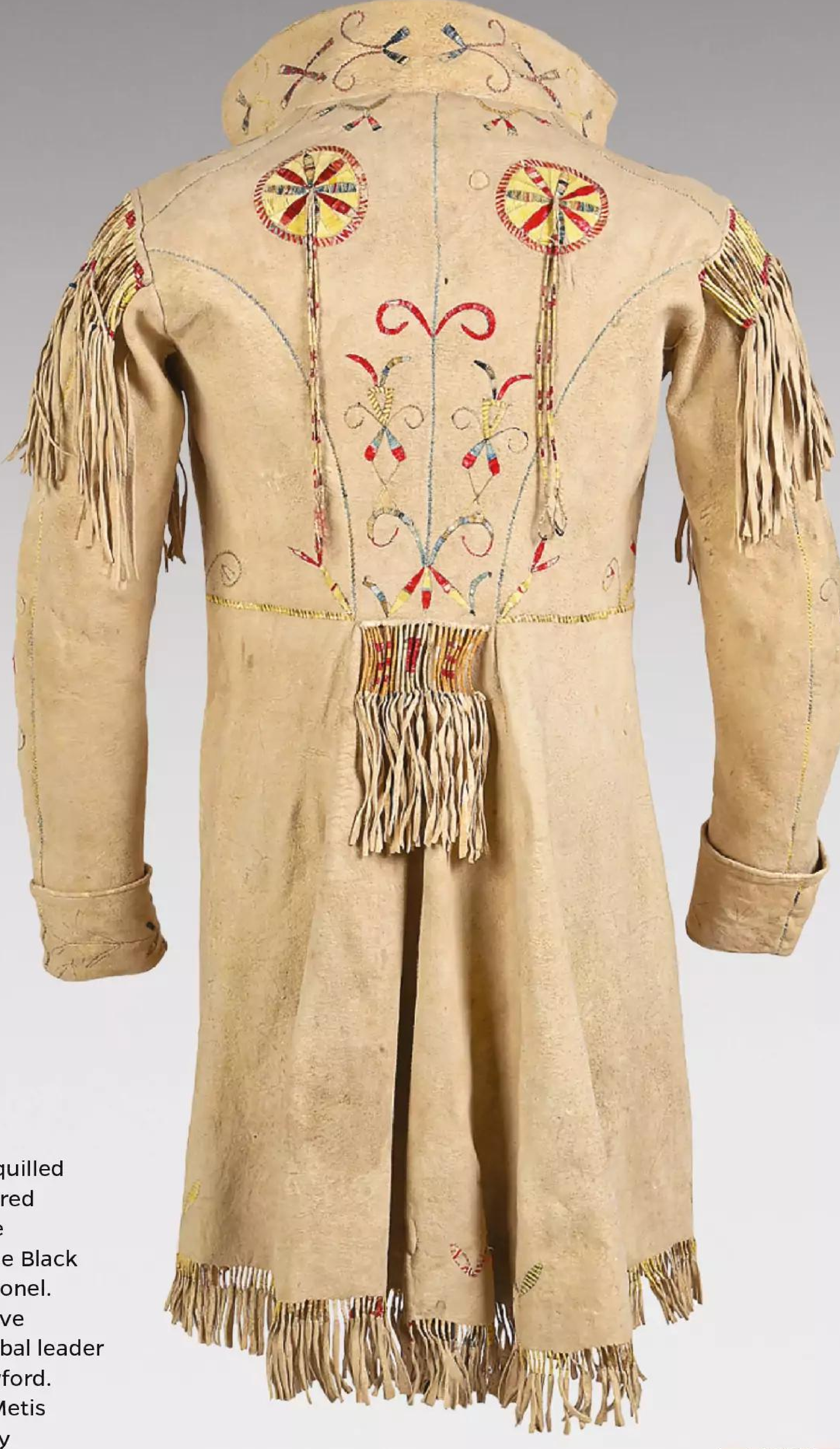

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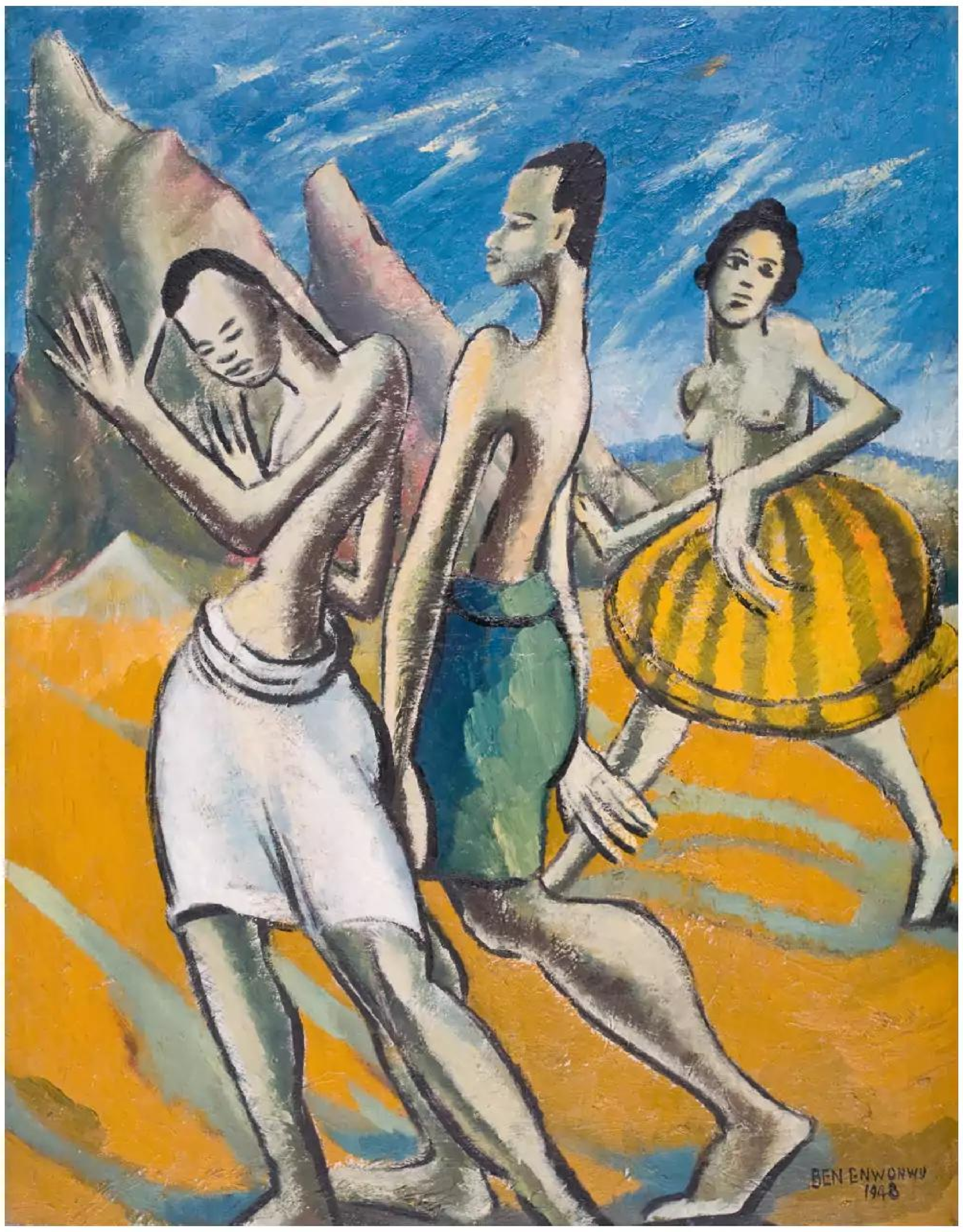

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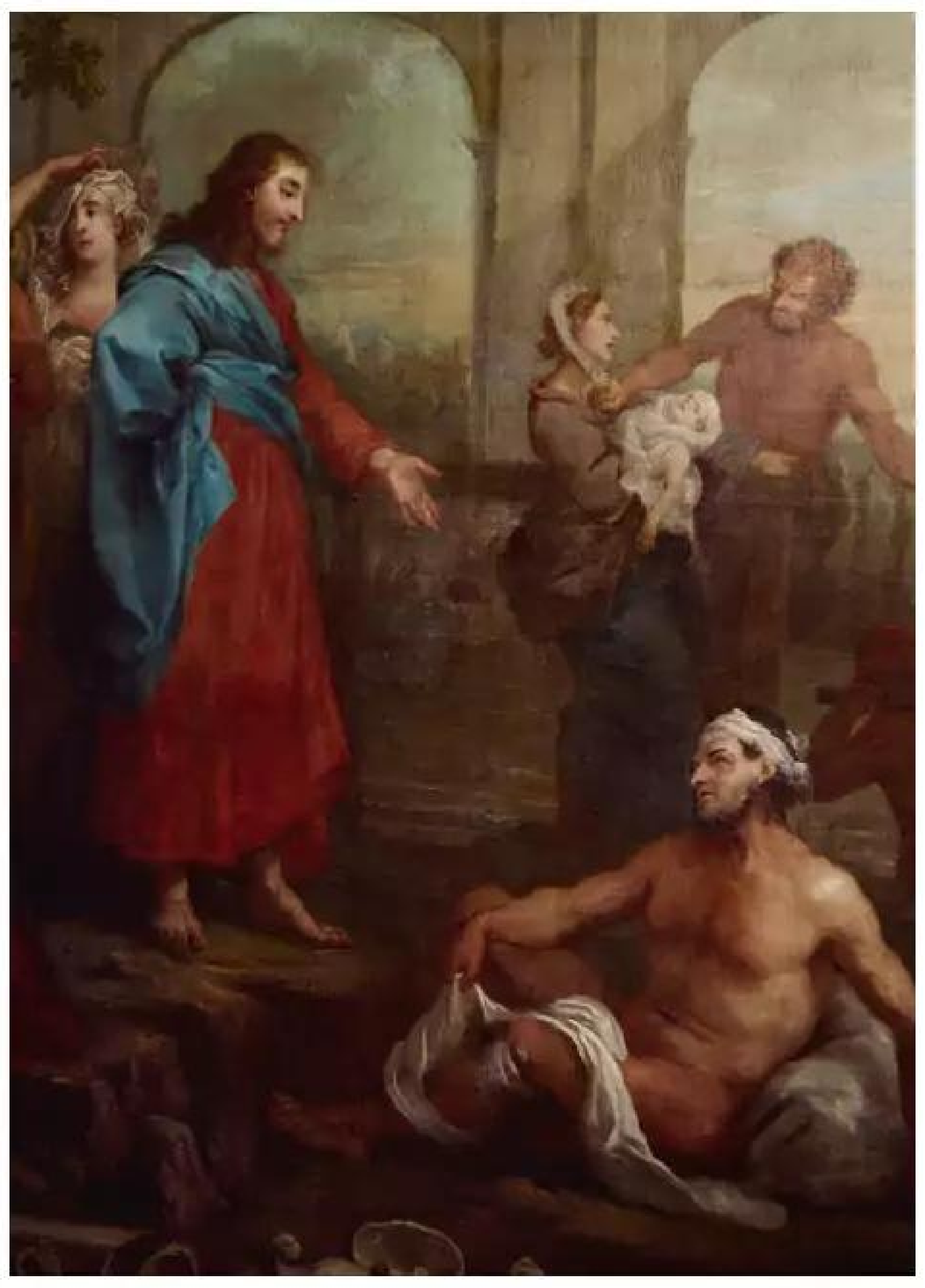

Photo: Richard Barnes; courtesy Princeton University Art Museum / Courtesy Ben Enwonwu Foundation/Bishop Otter Trust, University of Chichester; © The Ben Enwonwu Foundation / Photo: Jasper Fry

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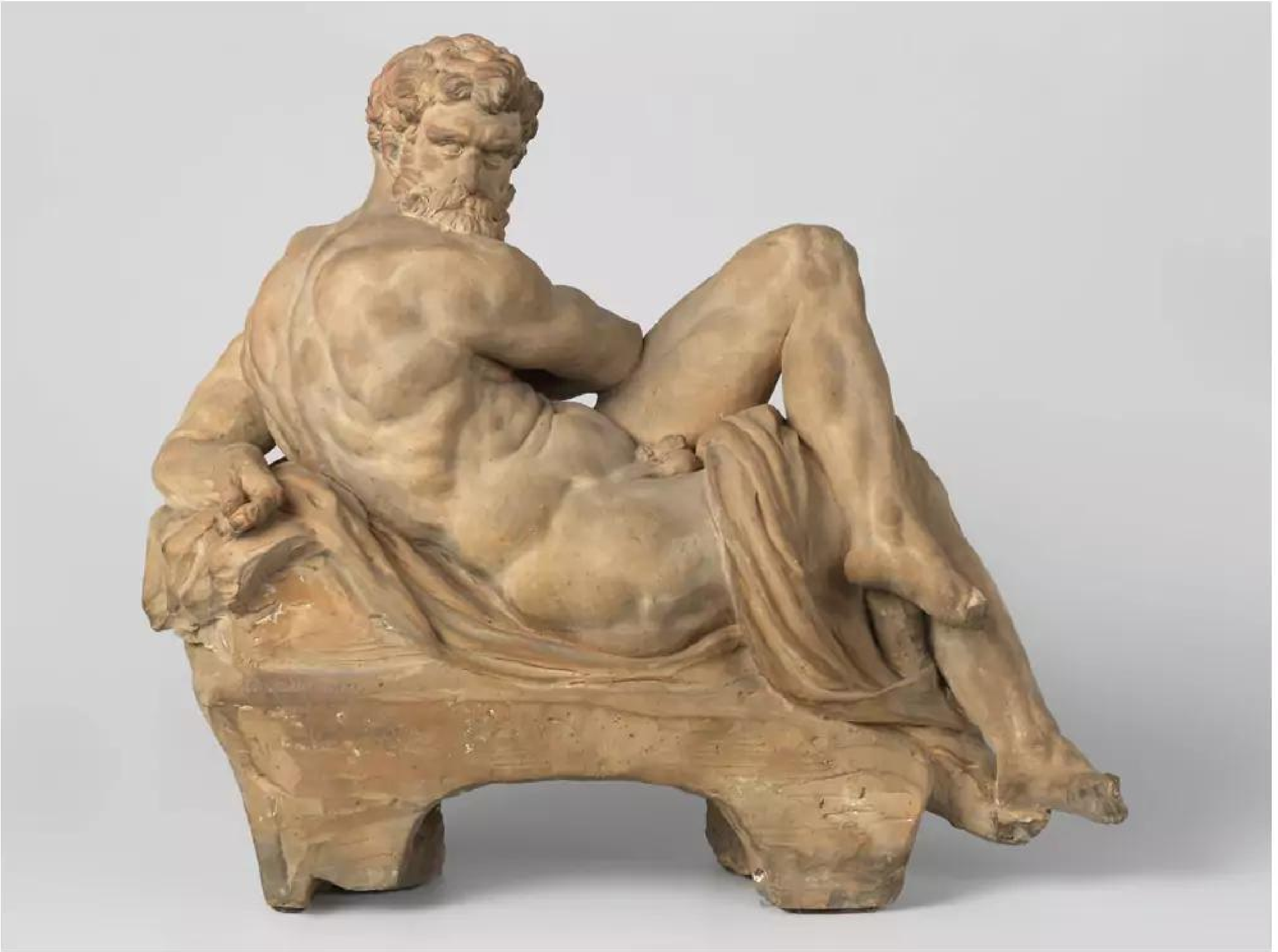

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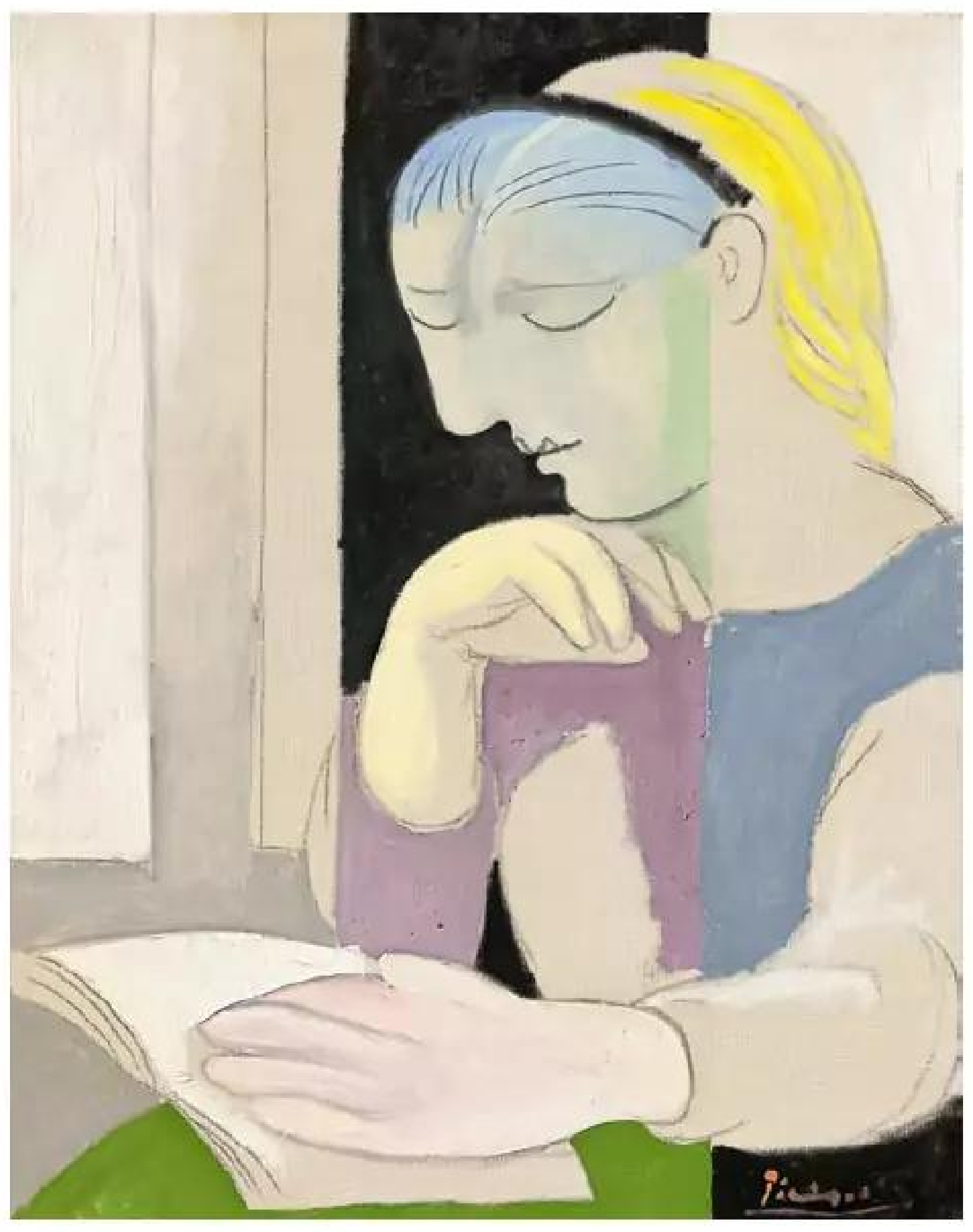

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COVER *Souvenir 8 (Edward VII in Masonic Regalia)*, 2019, Hew Locke (b. 1959), mixed media on antique Parian ware, 53 × 31 × 32cm. Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Memphis.
Photo: Anna Arca; image courtesy the Artist, Hales London and New York and P·P·O·W. © Hew Locke. All rights reserved, DACS 2025

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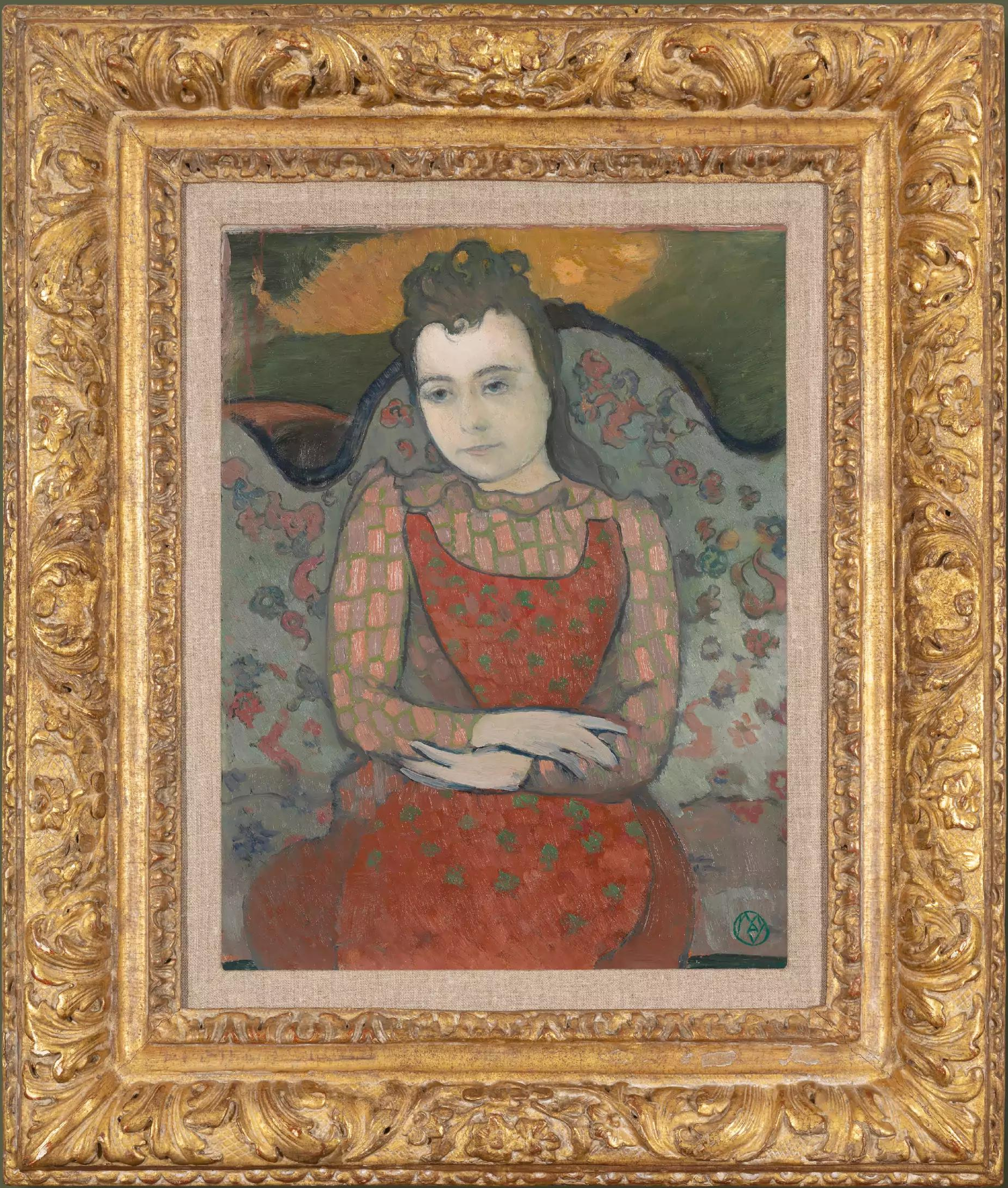

Maurice DENIS
Marthe on the Divan
Oil on board: 14 7/8 x 11 3/8 inches
Signed lower right with the artist's monogram

RENOIR DRAWINGS

OCTOBER 17, 2025 THROUGH
FEBRUARY 8, 2026

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themorgan.org

Renoir Drawings is organized by the Morgan Library & Museum and the Musée d'Orsay.

The exhibition is made possible by lead funding from the Jerome L. Greene Foundation.

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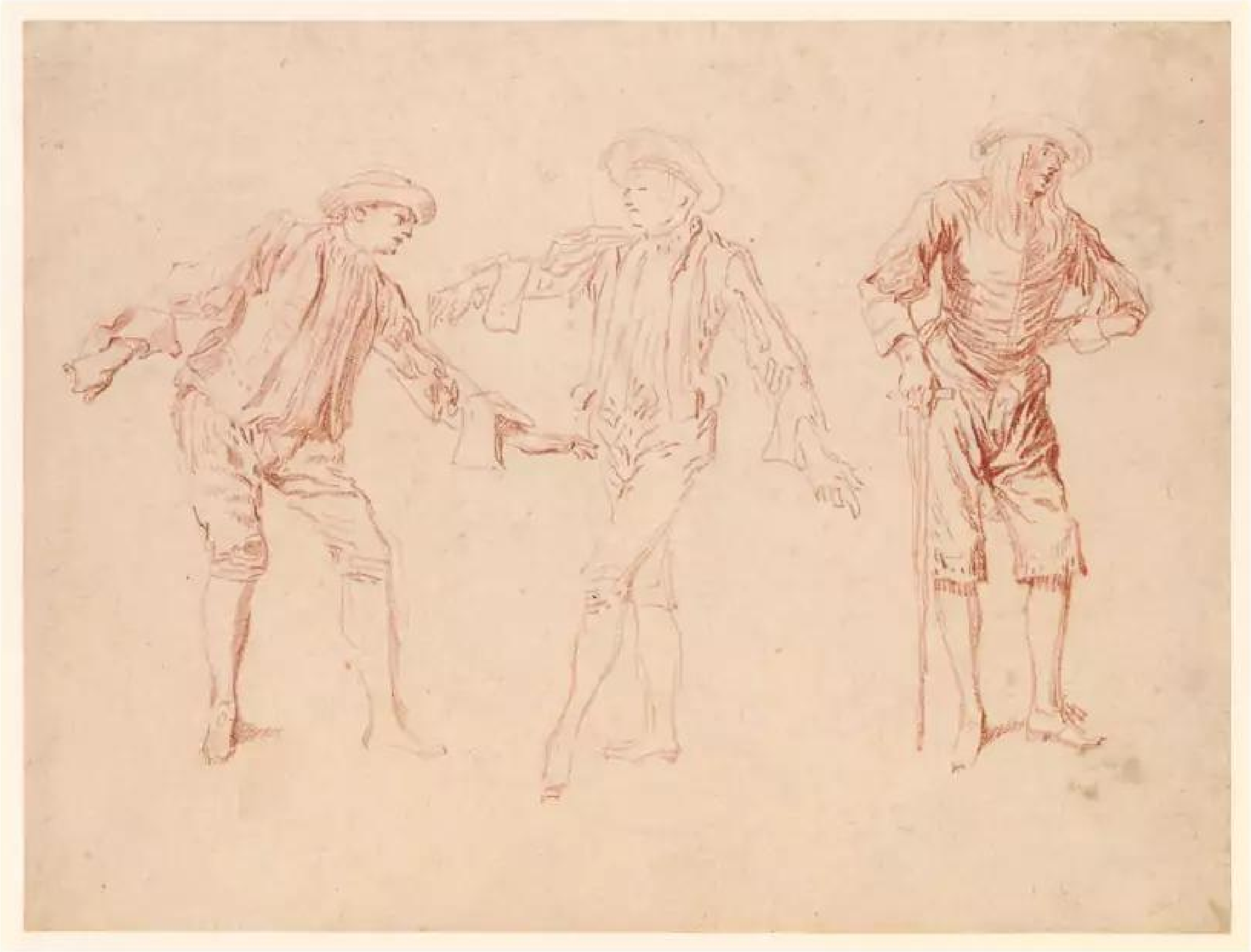
Generous support is provided by Denise Littlefield Sobel; an anonymous donor, in memory of Melvin R. Seiden; Hubert and Mireille Goldschmidt; and the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation. Additional support is provided by the Christian Humann Foundation; the Arthur F. and Alice E. Adams Charitable Foundation; the Robert Lehman Foundation; the Wolfgang Ratjen Stiftung, Liechtenstein; the Lucy Ricciardi Family Exhibition Fund; Christie's; and Robert Dance. The exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities. It is a program of the Morgan Drawing Institute.

Auguste Renoir (1841–1919), *Dance in the Country,* 1883. Pen and brush and gray ink on paper, 183/4 × 117/8 in. (47.6 × 30.2 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

In praise of uncertainty



Dancers, c. 1712, Antoine Watteau (1684–1721), red chalk on paper, 17.3 × 22.8cm. British Museum, London. Photo: © The Trustees of the British Museum, shared under a Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence

In mid September, I attended 'Colour and line: Watteau drawings' in its final days at the British Museum. It was a happy reminder of the many narratives that are contained within the BM. Any encounter with Watteau (1684–1721) naturally contains ambiguities. On display in the exhibition was a drawing of a Savoyarde (a woman from Savoy) in Paris. At the time the drawing was made she was a poor immigrant, to one independent state from another. Today, the historical Savoy region is split between France and Italy.

It was a reminder that even to state Watteau's nationality is ambiguous. He is technically a French artist, but his native city, Valenciennes, was part of the Habsburg Netherlands until seven years before his birth. And it is, perhaps, Watteau's Netherlandish inheritance that makes him so fascinating. The *trois crayons* technique (using red, black and white chalk) for which he is so renowned has a particularly strong tradition in the Low Countries.

The drawing of the Savoyarde is treated with the same care and attention – the same respect – as the Parisian aristocrats who appear in other drawings. The face of the woman is lined with concern; the dress's tiring bulk is evident in the thick red chalk, in contrast to the shining silk that the artist evokes elsewhere with the same medium. Watteau is particularly good at capturing the weight of things. Near the drawing of the Savoyarde is a servant carrying a tray balanced on one hand and a carafe in the other, the elegance of the man summed up by the perfectly poised hand beneath the tray.

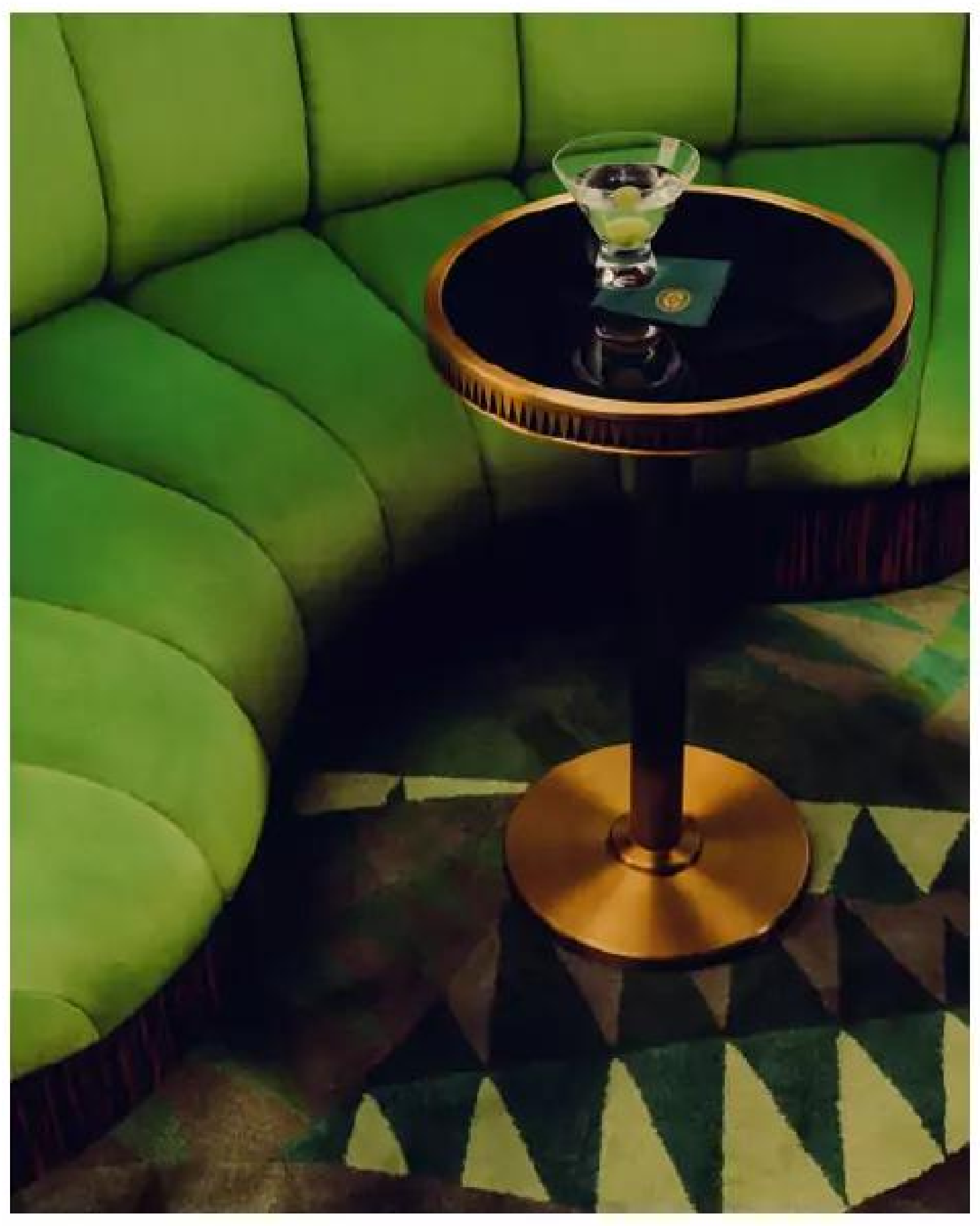
Elegance is a word that is often used when discussing Watteau, as though it is easier to appreciate the surface of his *Fêtes galantes* paintings than enter their ambiguous atmosphere. The ambiguity is, of course, present in his drawings too. In a witty curatorial conceit, drawings of standing soldiers and of dancers were placed next to each other. The figure on the right of the sheet with the dancers is holding a crutch that points to the ground. Is he, perhaps beating time for the dance? At first glance it could appear to be a long sword. The leg of the middle soldier might be about to flick into a *contredanse*. The figures might be mistaken for the same type of subject, soldier to dancer and back again. This is another way of saying that violence and pleasure are never far apart in Watteau's world.

Looking at Watteau's drawings is, in some ways, an easy pleasure. But it is probably not everyone's idea of enjoyment to spend time looking at 18th-century French drawings. That raised another thought while I was at the exhibition. It is no secret that the secretary of state for education – at the time of writing, Bridget Phillipson – has commissioned a review of the curriculum. Many people have seen this as an opportunity to put art back into education. But during a panel at the Art Business Conference in London last month, both Thangam Debbonaire and Tristram Hunt (a current and a former Labour politician, respectively, who have both campaigned for a change to the curriculum) made it clear that they were no longer optimistic about effecting this change. At its best, learning about art is a version of learning to see. To have a generation who can better see the ambiguities inherent in any project and the fragility of weighty matters is something worth supporting.

EDWARD BEHRENS,
EDITOR

AGENDA

Apollo's exhibitions of the month



1

1925–2025: One Hundred Years of Art Deco
Musée des Art Décoratifs, Paris
22 October–26 April 2026

In April 1925, decorators, artists, designers and the like descended on Paris for the Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes, an event organised by the French government to promote the very latest in luxury style. This show marks the centenary of the movement that became known as art deco with a colossal display of more than 1,000 objects.

2

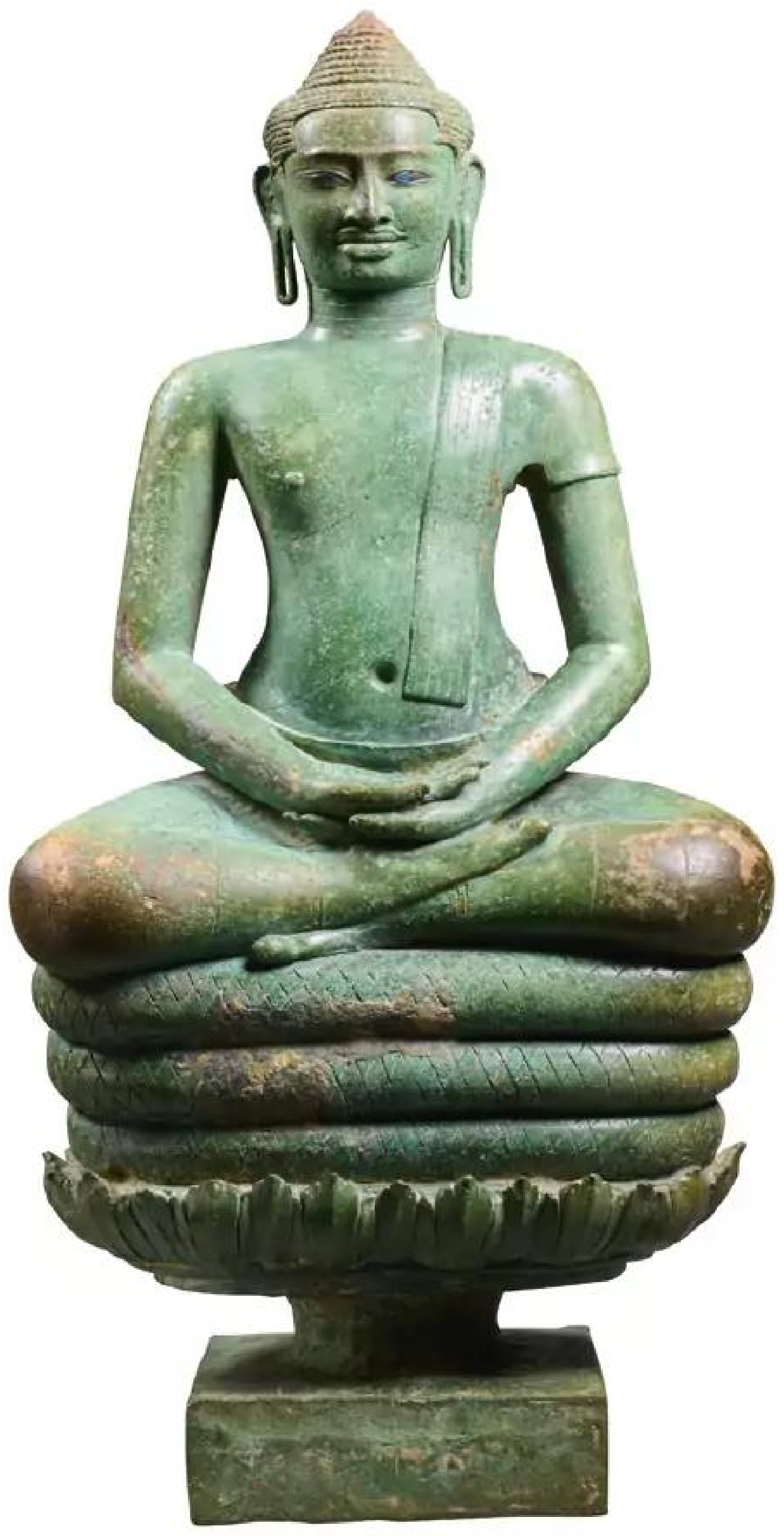
Suzanne Duchamp
Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt
10 October–11 January 2026

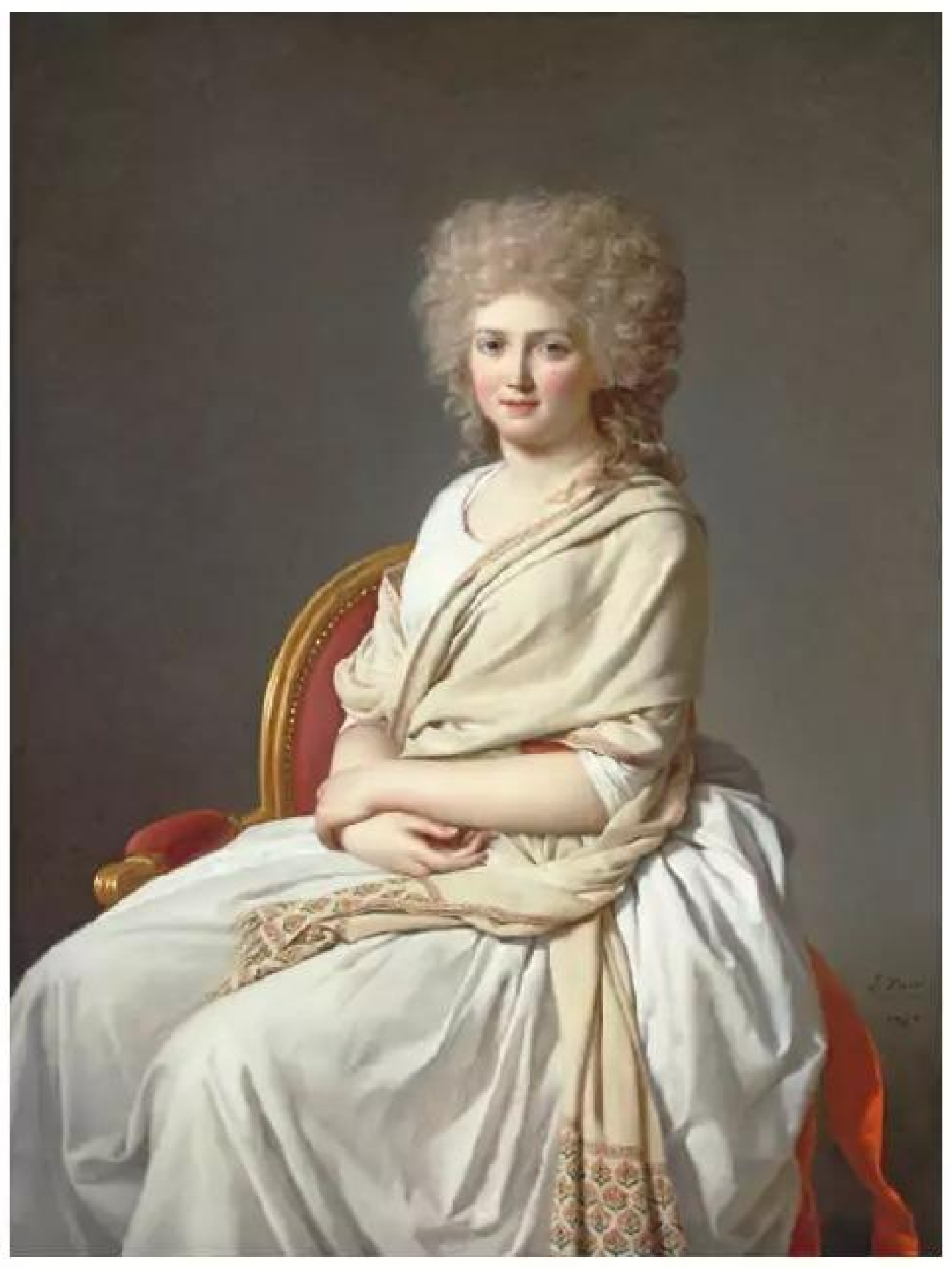
Bringing together some 70 works, this is the first major retrospective dedicated to the French painter, collagist and sculptor, whose contribution to the Dada movement has long been obscured by the artistic success of her brothers, Marcel Duchamp in particular.

3

Royal Bronzes: Cambodian Art of the Divine
Minneapolis Institute of Art
25 October–18 January 2026

Organised with the Musée Guimet in Paris and the National Museum of Cambodia, this display of some 200 objects shows the splendour of bronze craftsmanship in the Khmer Empire between the ninth and 15th centuries.

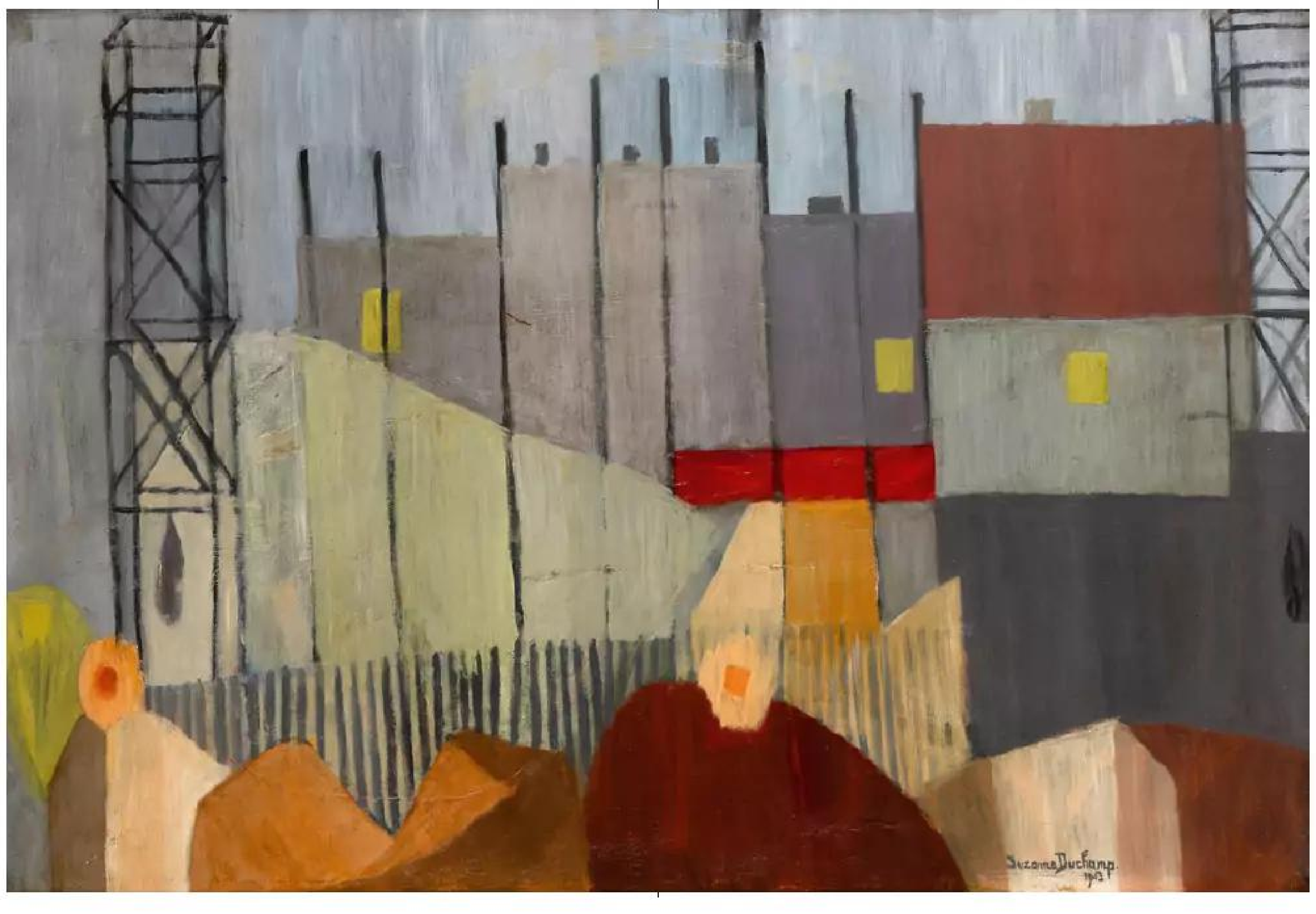


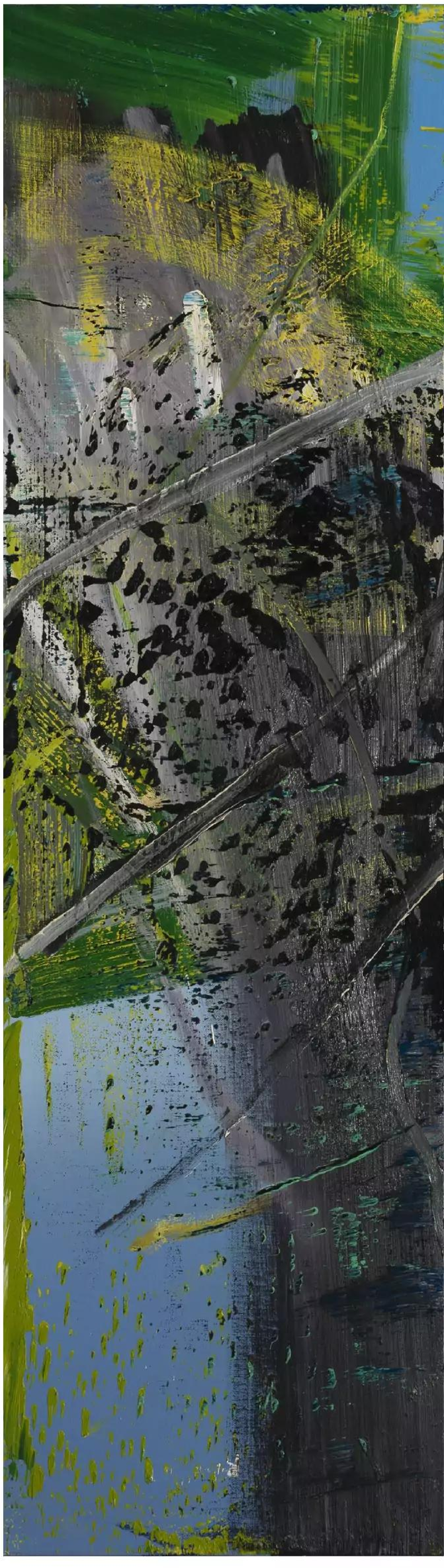


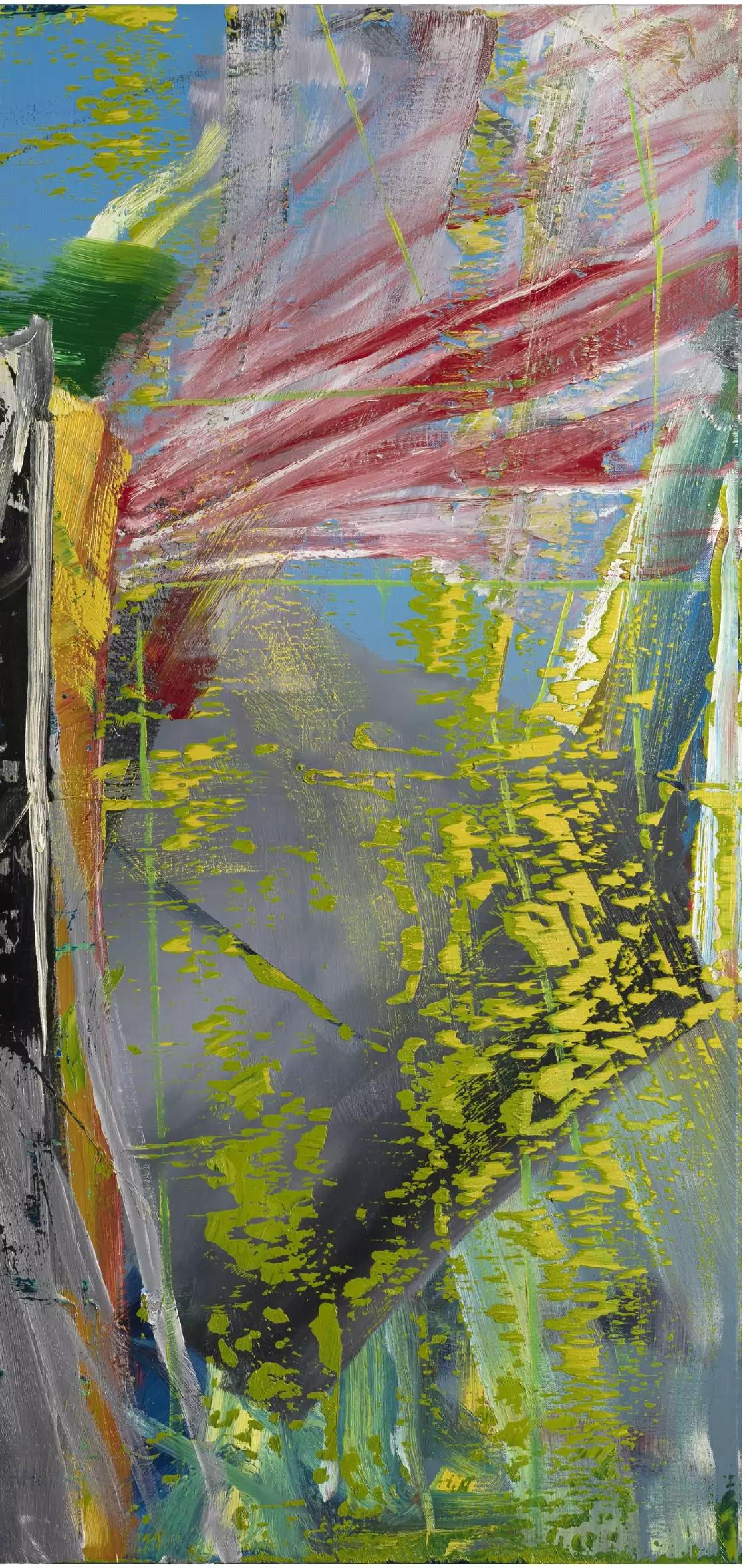
4

Jacques-Louis David
Musée du Louvre, Paris
15 October–26 January 2026

This exhibition coincides with the bicentenary of David's death, which occurred while he was exiled in Brussels because of his loyalty to Napoleon. The Louvre's impressive collection of works by the painter is augmented by more than 100 loans, including *The Death of Marat* (1793) from the Royal Museum of Fine Arts of Belgium and *The Tennis Court Oath* (1790–94), which, due to political tensions, was never finished.







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5

Gerhard Richter

Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris
17 October–2 March

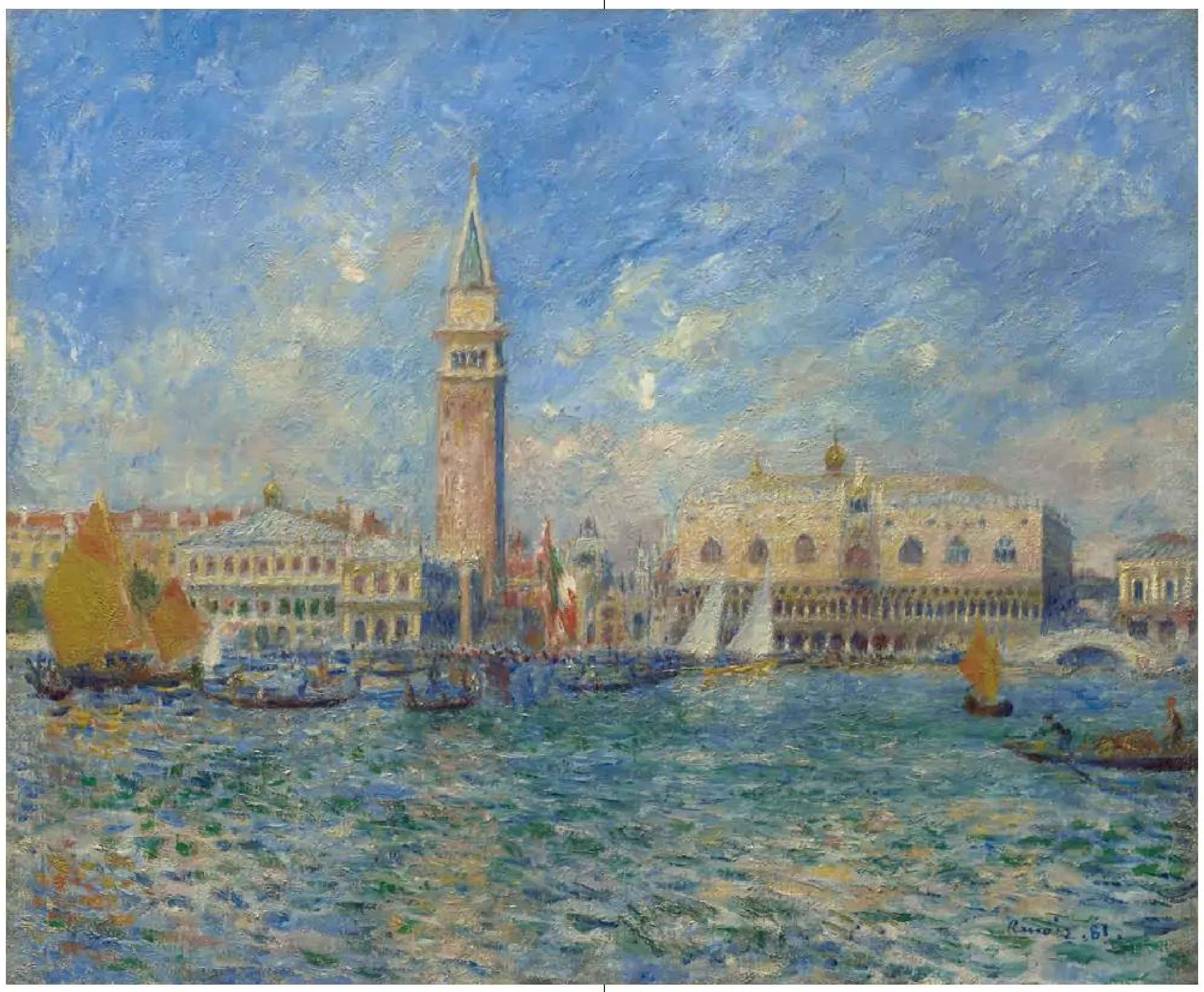
Around 270 works by the German painter, who is now 93, are presented across the foundation's galleries in this retrospective. The show stretches from 1962 to 2024, with each section covering a decade of Richter's career; highlights include one of the artist's signature 'squeegee' paintings, playfully named *Carrot* (1984; pictured) for the streaks of orange and green at its centre.

6

Made in Ancient Egypt

Fitzwilliam Museum,
Cambridge
3 October–12 April 2026

This exhibition celebrates the craftspeople of ancient Egypt, drawing on ceramics, sculpture, jewellery and more from the Fitzwilliam's own collection as well as international loans.



7

Monet and Venice

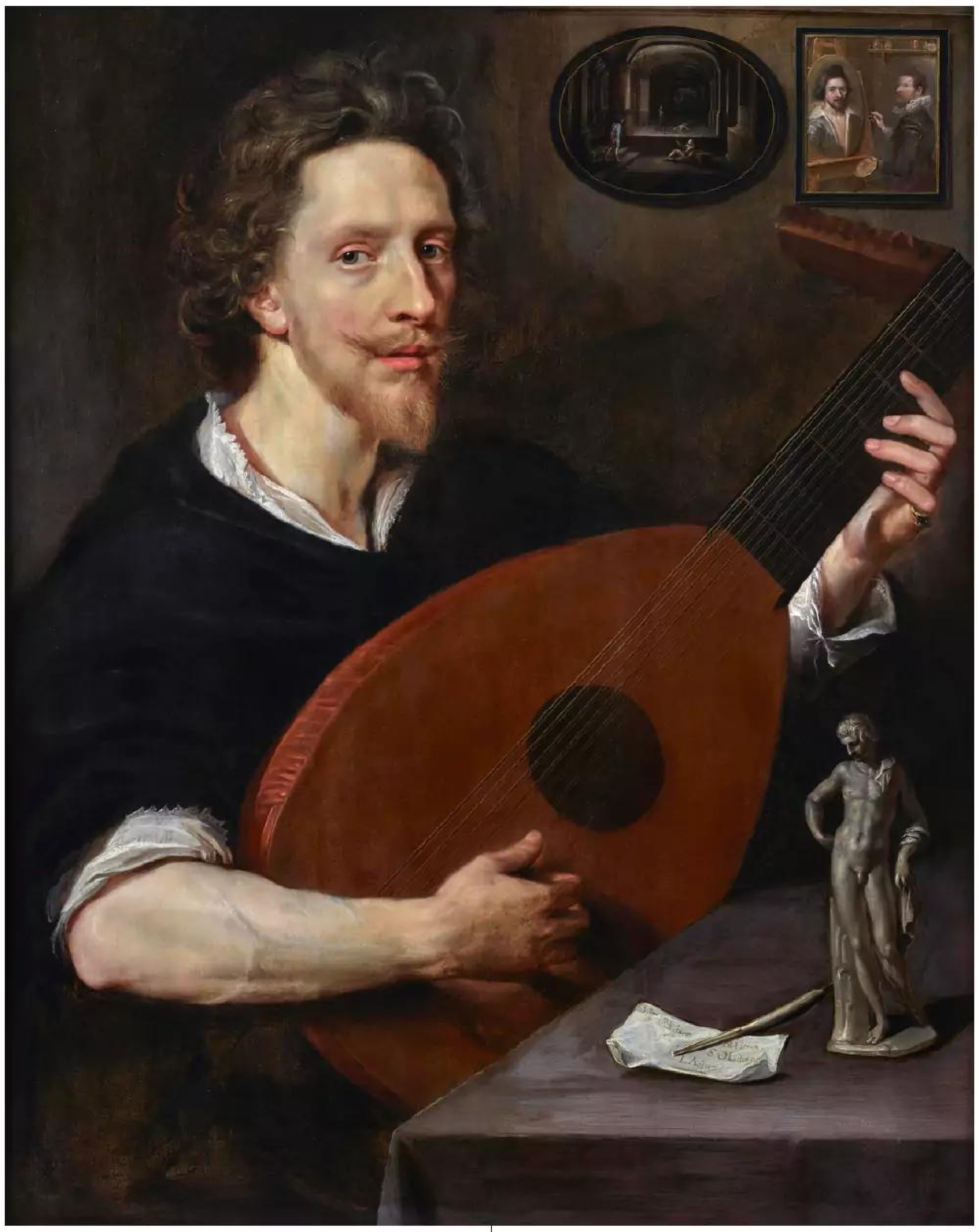
Brooklyn Museum, New York
11 October–1 February 2026

The largest presentation of Monet's work in New York in more than 25 years pairs the artists' ethereal scenes of *La Serenissima* with depictions by Canaletto, Turner, Renoir, Sargent, et al. Together they show how Monet developed a unique way of capturing the light, movement and architecture of the city. Photographs and books relating to Venice are shown alongside other paintings, including a work from the *Water Lilies* series.

AGENDA

With the fair about to descend on Regent's Park in London this month, here are some of the events not to miss, both indoors and out

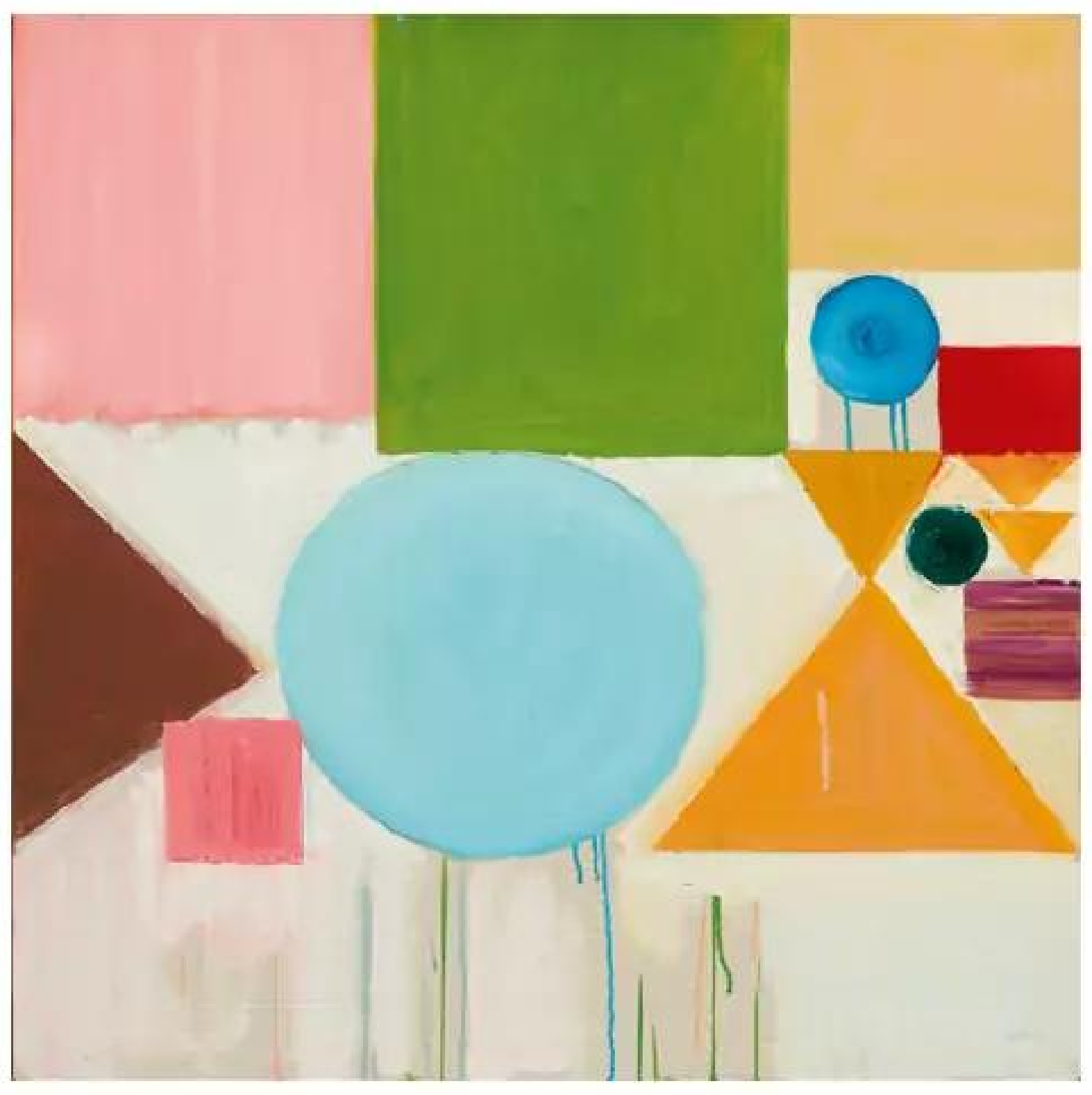
Frieze



△ Frieze Masters

15–19 October

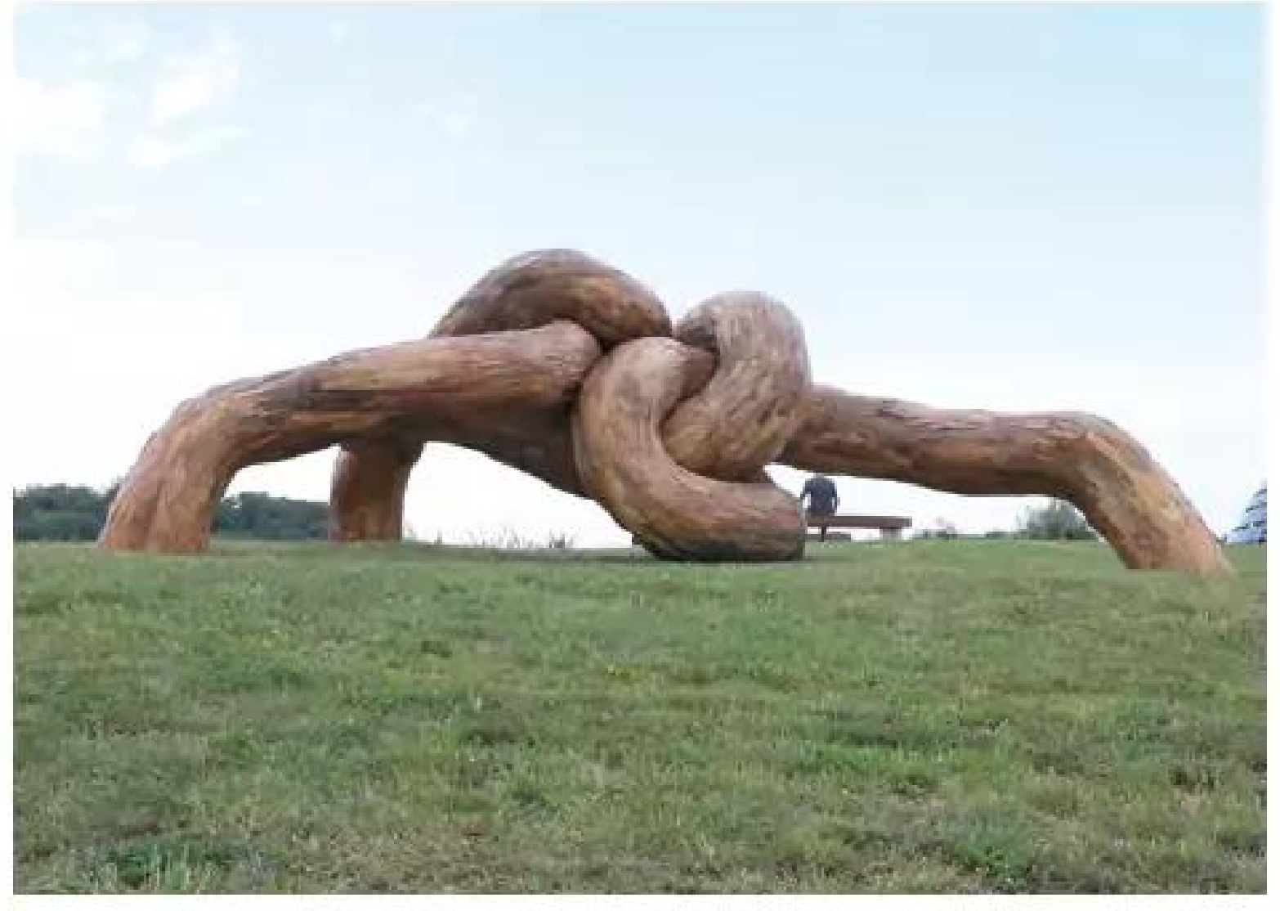
More than 120 galleries from 26 countries take up temporary residence in Regent's Park for this year's edition of the fair. Among the 20 first-time participants is Vito Schnabel Gallery, which is offering an intriguing sketch by Francis Picabia from 1931. Returning exhibitors include the Weiss Gallery, with a portrait of the English composer Nicholas Lanier by Hendrick van Steenwijk the Younger from the early 17th century (pictured).



▽ Frieze Sculpture

Until 2 November

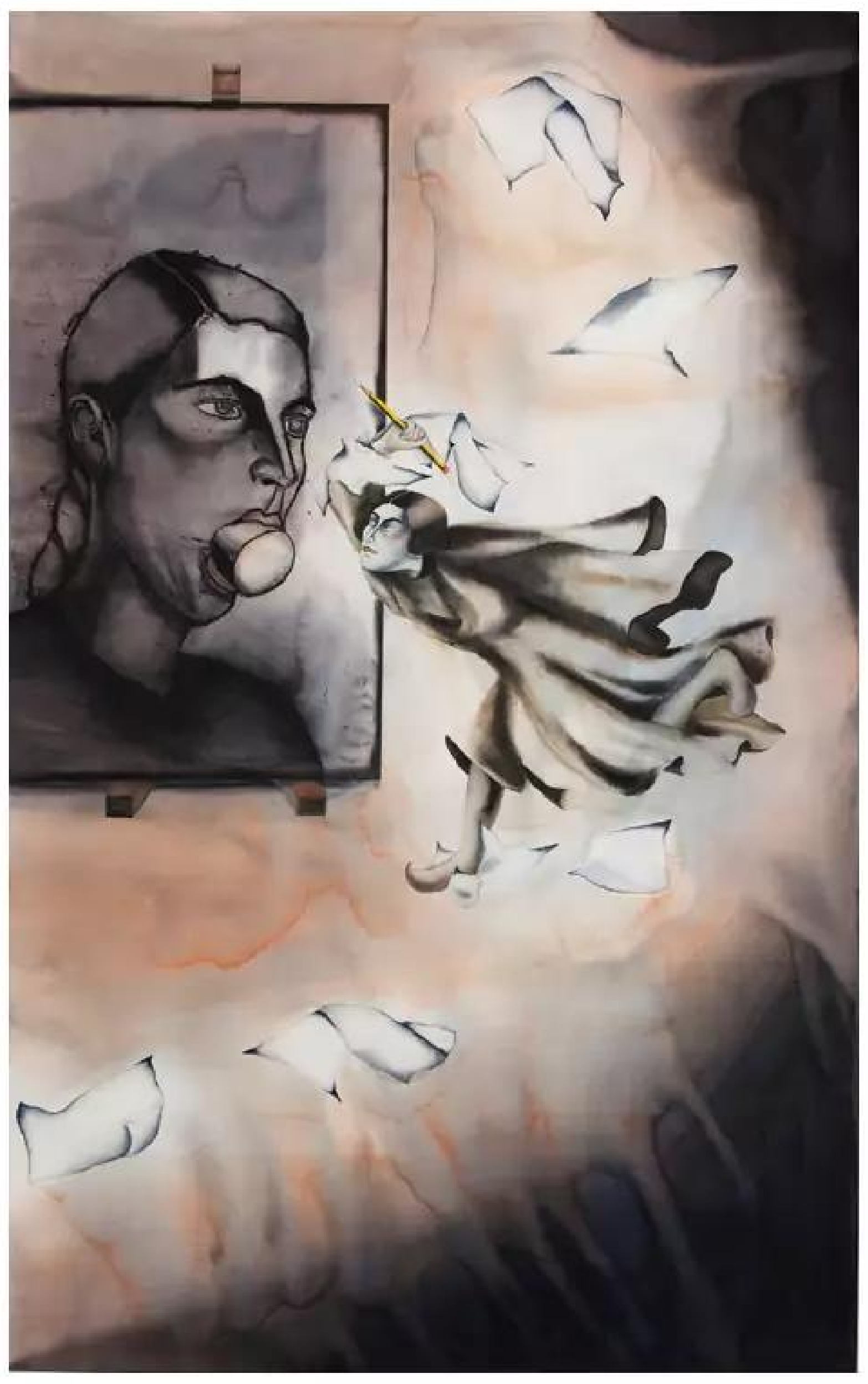
Frieze Sculpture, in which artworks are dispersed across Regent's Park's English Gardens from mid September until early November, is now in its 13th edition. This year's theme is 'In the Shadows'; each work has been selected by curator Fatoş Üstek for its ties to the concepts of darkness, mystery and concealment. Among the 14 participating artists are Erwin Wurm, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith and Henrique Oliveira.



◁ Spotlight

15–19 October

The Spotlight section of Frieze Masters comprises solo presentations of lesser-known artists from the 20th century and this year focuses on the 1950s–70s. Highlights here include a colourful abstract composition by American artist Dorothy Antoinette LaSelle (1964; pictured) presented by Inman Gallery from Houston, and an undulating sculpture carved from variegated Jordanian jade by Mona Saudi, offered by Dubai-based gallery Lawrie Shabibi.



△ Studio

15–19 October

The artist's place of work is the focus of the Studio section of Frieze Masters: here, exhibitors present the work of a single living artist. Like its previous two editions, Studio is curated by the art historian and curator Sheena Wagstaff, joined this year by Margrethe Troensegaard. Six galleries from around the world are taking part: Vadehra Art Gallery from New Delhi will explore the work of Anju Dodiya, while Gagosian will turn its attention to the British artist and collector Glenn Brown.

Courtesy Weiss Gallery / Courtesy Inman Gallery / © Henrique Oliveira; courtesy Almeida & Dale/Galerie Georges-Philippe & Nathalie Vallois / Courtesy Vadehra Art Gallery; © Anju Dodiya

RUPERT WACE
at
FRIEZE MASTERS
The Regent's Park, 15–19 October
STAND F12

Egyptian bronze cat with inlays

26th Dynasty, circa 688–525 BC

Length: 11.8 cm

Acquired 1960s or earlier, Erich Maria Remarque (1898–1970) and Paulette Goddard (1910–1990); sold Sotheby's London, 10 April 1978, lot 295

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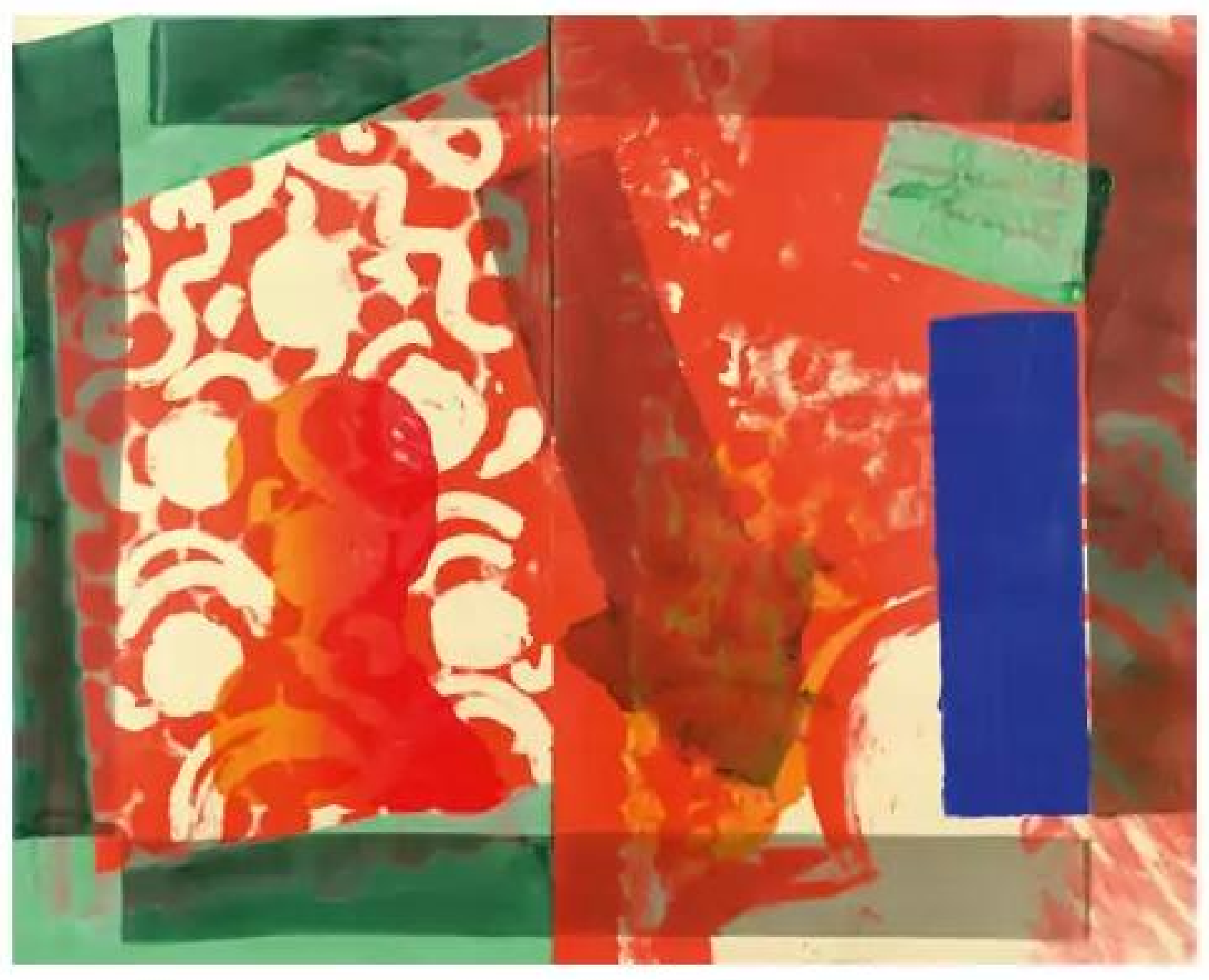
As the London art world kicks into a higher gear this month, enticing new exhibitions are opening in museums and galleries across the capital

City delights

△ Cecil Beaton's Fashionable World
National Portrait Gallery, London
9 October–11 January 2026

Cecil Beaton's work as a fashion photographer for *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair* forms the core of this exhibition, which also takes a broader look at his career, from his appointment as a war photographer to his Oscar-winning costume designs for *My Fair Lady* (1964). Among the 250 objects here are photographs, sketches and clothes, as well as letters and other ephemera.

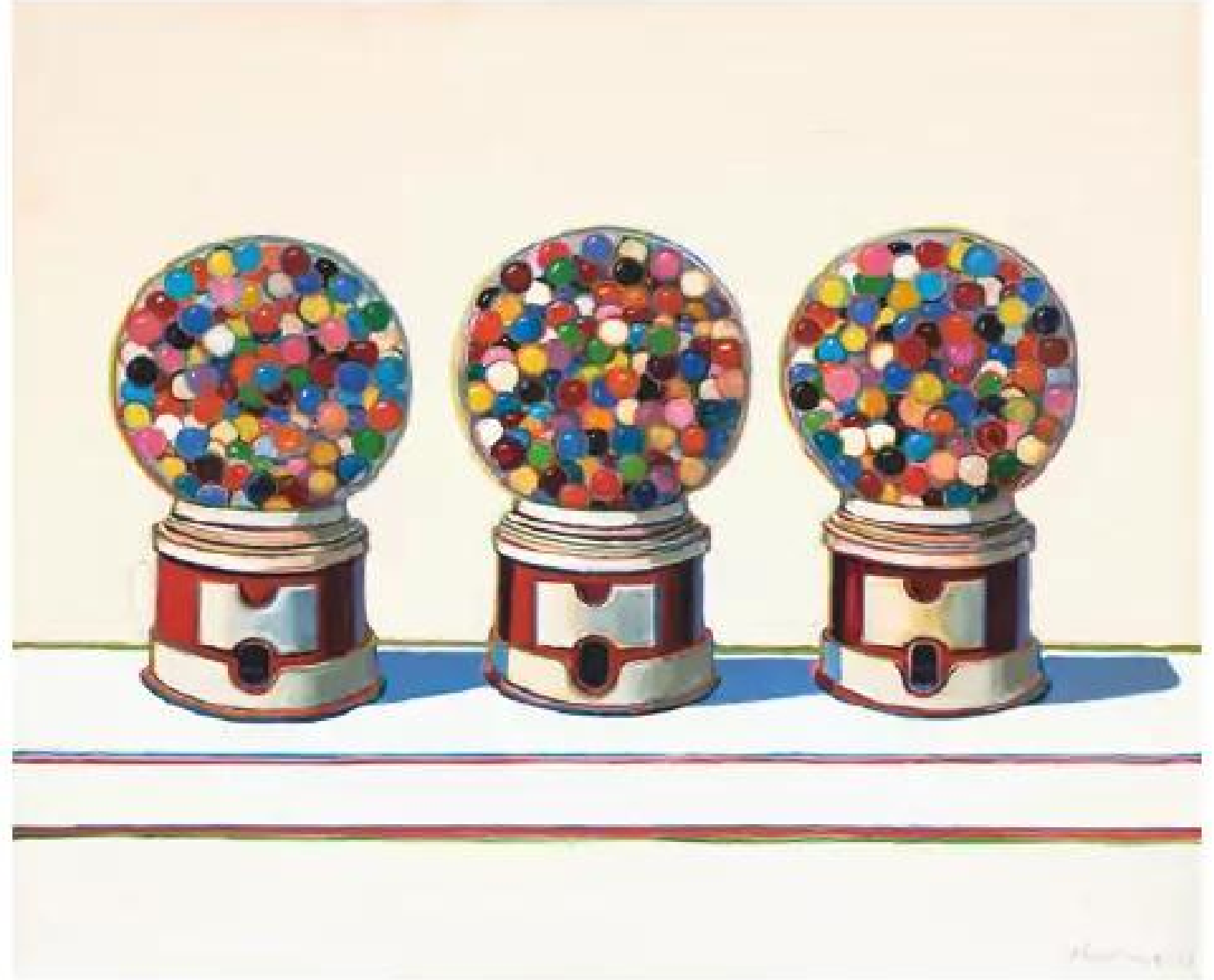


△ Howard Hodgkin: In a Public Garden
Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery, London
1 October–8 March 2026

The largest exhibition of the British artist's original prints to date takes place throughout John Soane's former country home, with works dating from 1966 to 2016 on display. Highlights include a vibrant lithograph titled *Moonlight* (1980; pictured).

▽ Wayne Thiebaud: American Still Life
Courtauld Gallery, London
10 October–18 January 2026

In the late 1950s, Wayne Thiebaud began painting still lifes that swapped the genre's more traditional subjects for modern delights: thickly iced cakes, slabs of pie, sauced-up hot dogs and gumball machines. How these playful paintings captured the consumerist culture of post-war America is the focus of the artist's first institutional exhibition in the United Kingdom.



◁ Lee Miller
Tate Britain, London
2 October–15 February 2026

Featuring some 250 photographs, prints and other archival materials – some of which have never been on public display – this retrospective covers the entirety of Lee Miller's varied career. As well as exploring her early days as a model for American *Vogue*, her mentorship by Man Ray in Paris and her work in Cairo, it also takes in her experience as a photojournalist during the Second World War.

Courtesy Cecil Beaton Studio Archive / Courtesy Cristea Roberts Gallery, London; © Estate of Howard Hodgkin. All rights reserved. DACS/Artimage 2025 / © Lee Miller Archives, England 2025. All rights reserved. leemiller.co.uk

PETER FINER

ANTIQUE ARMS, ARMOUR AND WORKS OF ART

FRIEZE MASTERS

15 – 19 October 2025
The Regent's Park
STAND E03

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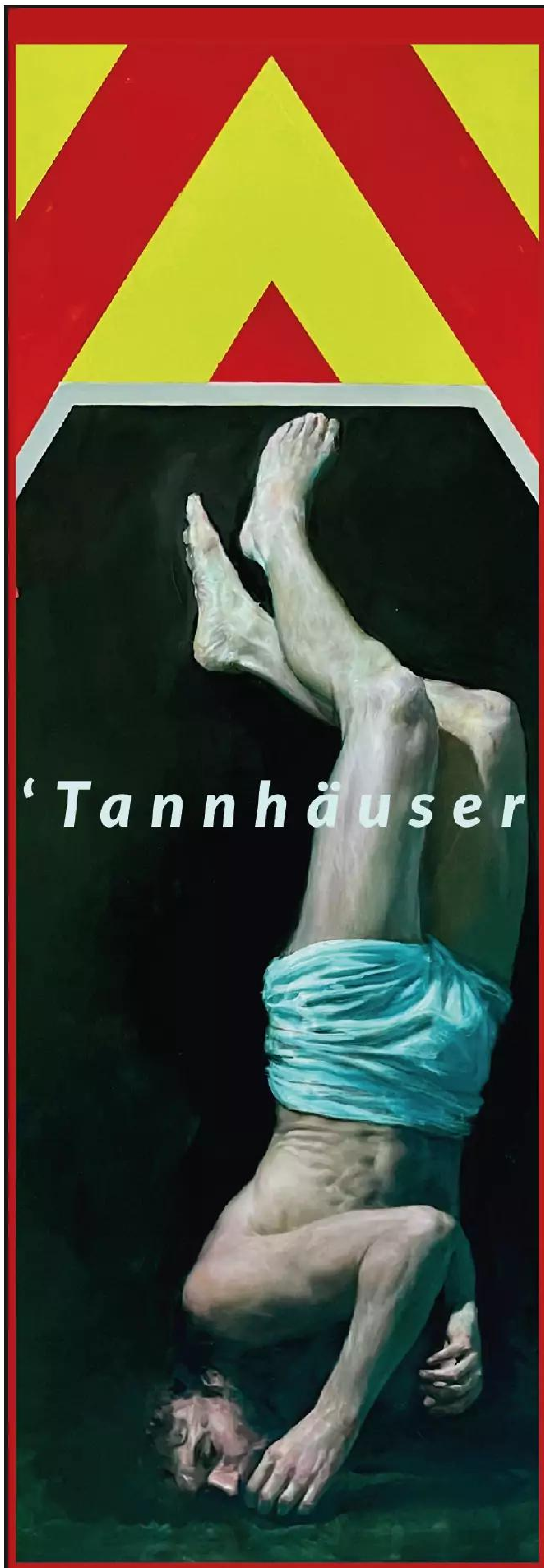
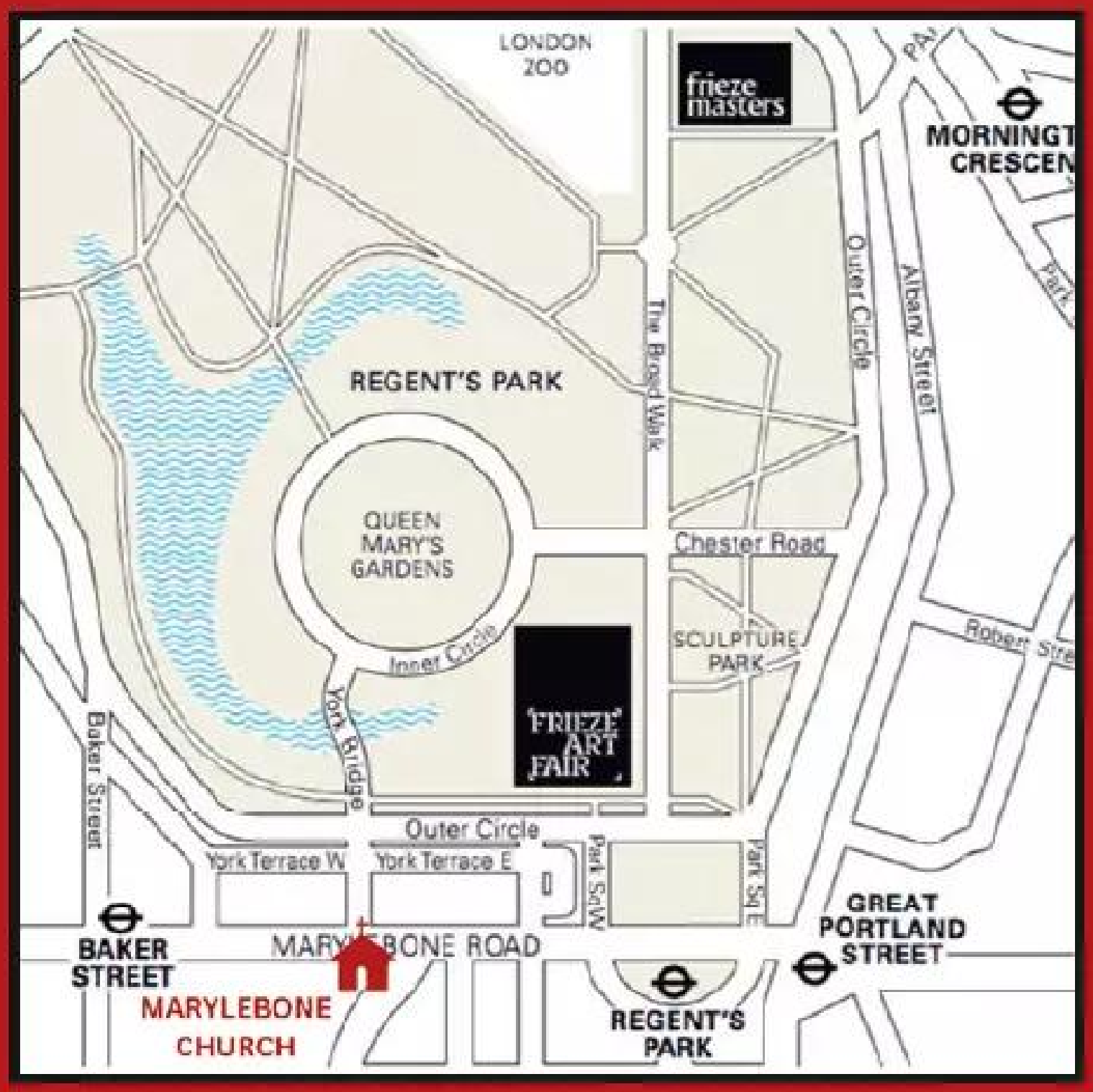
A Suite of Magnificent Armour for Man and Horse with Royal Provenance, Late 16th century

Northern Italy, Milanese workshops.
Steel, gold, copper alloy, period textile forming the bridle, leather



Paul S Benney

'Tannhäuser Gate'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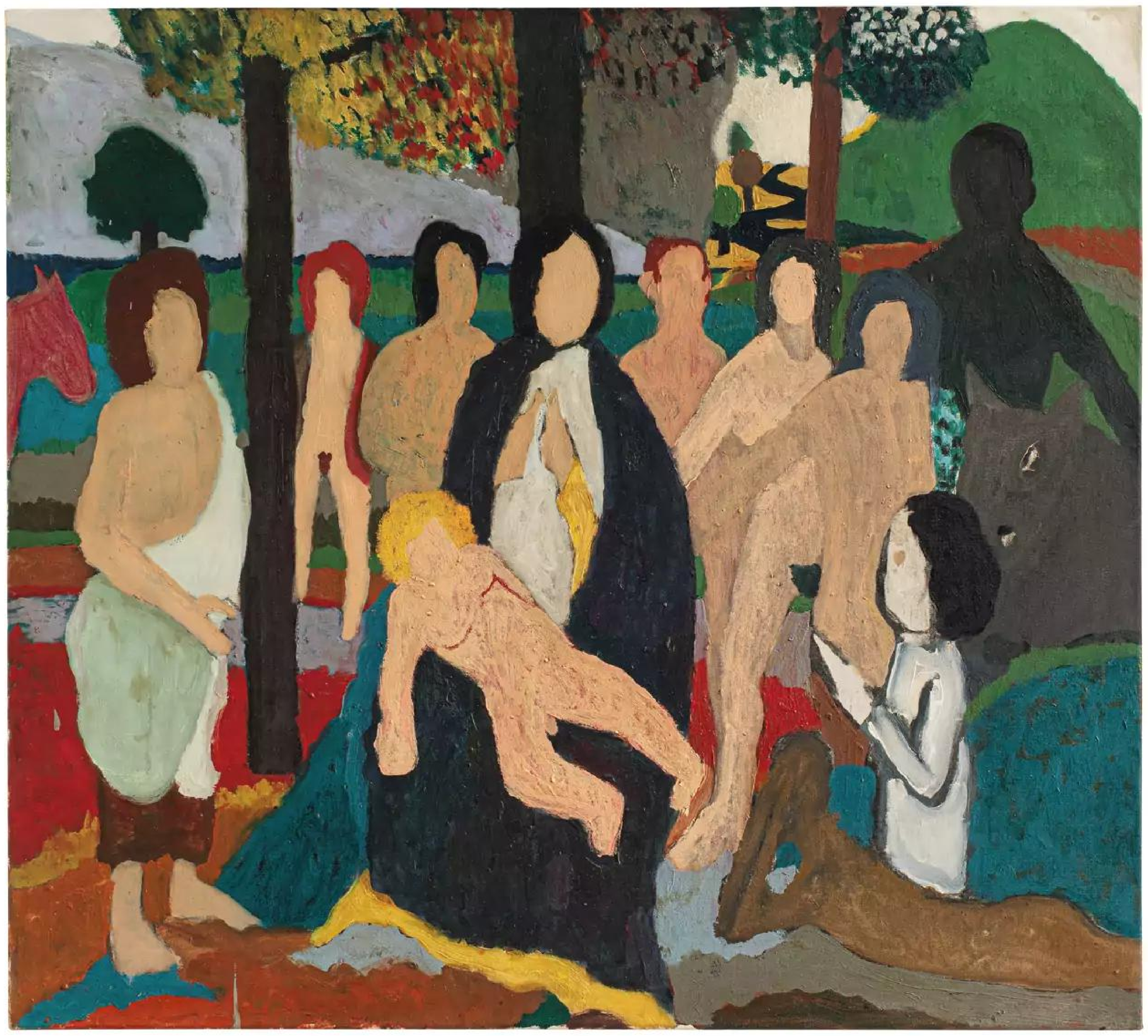
Art Basel Paris



Nativity, 1961, Bob Thompson (1937–66), oil on canvas, 92.7 × 102.9cm. Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, New York

Art Basel's smallest fair is flying the flag for the French art market, writes **MICHAEL DELGADO**

Art Basel Paris has been in a process of reinvention. The fair began in 2022 with a hastily organised event as Paris+ par Art Basel and held its first two editions in the Grand Palais Éphémère, a temporary space used while the Grand Palais itself was being prepared to host the Olympics. Last year's fair was the first to take place in the Grand Palais and this year's will do so too, even though renovations are not fully complete. More change is on the way: the fair's director since 2022, Clément Delépine, recently announced that he is leaving the role after this year's edition. 'It's been a ride,' he tells me when we speak in late August, but 'this is as close as it gets for a normal edition for us.'

The fair is the smallest in Art Basel's roster – a 'jewel box', Delépine calls it. Yet it is a significant undertaking, with more than 200 exhibitors from 41 countries displaying a range of modern and contemporary work. The exhibitors are grouped into three sections: Galeries, Emergence and Premise (which focuses on thematic displays) and among the galleries are 29 newcomers – 'quite a statement', Delépine says, given the 'fierce' competition for space. These include Lodovico Corsini from Brussels, showing works by the Moroccan artist Meriem Bennani and Cape Town-based Stevenson, which is bringing works produced in South Africa in the 1990s. New collaborations are in the pipeline too, a standout being a booth by Jeffrey Deitch and Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, presenting work by the mid-century artist Bob Thompson.

Art Basel Paris has an ambitious remit: as Delépine says, a fair is 'a transactional platform' but also a tool of 'soft power' that can show off the strength of the French art market. It is important to Delépine that the fair has a 'French flavour' and that this message is heard 'beyond the walls of the Grand Palais' and not just by the clientele who are there to buy. The public programme is a major part of this: this year it includes a project organised with Miu Miu at the Palais d'Iéna, spearheaded by the artist Helen Marten, as well as the 'Oh La La!' project, first seen last year, which allows a curator to stage a 'creative rehang' of works, forging a 'narrative arc' that runs through the fair as a whole; this year the guest curator is the prominent film-maker and fashion writer Loïc Prigent.

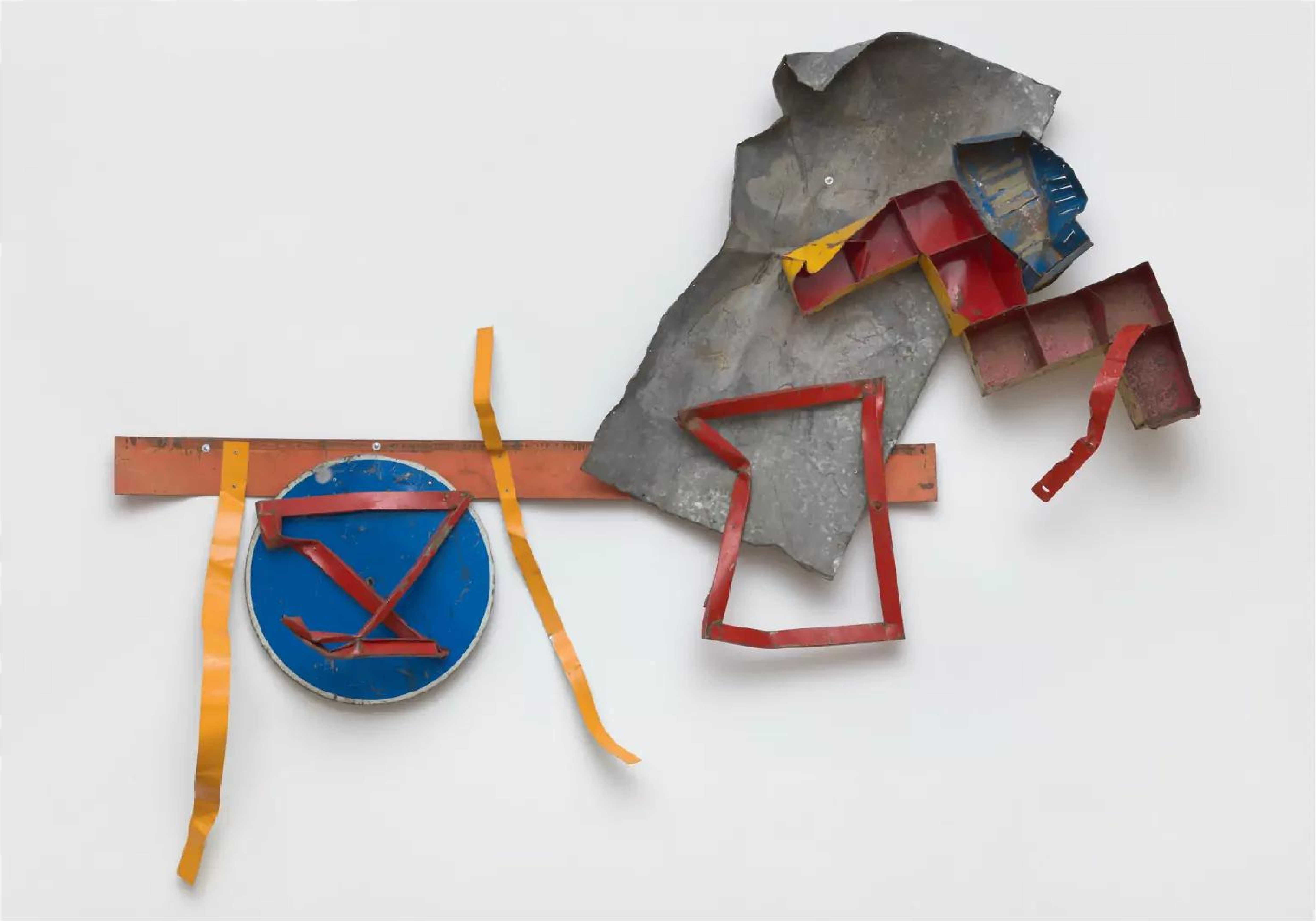
One of the things that really excites Delépine is when a gallery 'commits to a solo presentation. I find it incredibly audacious.' Among the highlights here are Commonwealth and Council, bringing a display by Gala Porras-Kim; and newcomer Crèvecœur, which is showing work by the Japanese painter Yu Nishimura. With the artist now represented jointly by Sadie Coles and David Zwirner, Delépine refers to Nishimura as one of those artists who will be 'harder to get in future'. Art Basel Paris has its fair share of established artists and galleries, but it prides itself on nurturing talent too – as Delépine puts it, 'the cool, rising galleries that you see exhibiting downstairs are the blue-chip, established galleries of tomorrow.'

Art Basel Paris takes place in the Grand Palais, Paris, from 24–26 October (artbasel.com/paris).

Courtesy and © Michael Rosenfeld Gallery LLC, New York, NY

AROUND THE GALLERIES

GALLERY HIGHLIGHTS



Greek Toy Glut (Neapolitan), 1987, Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008), assembled metal, 207 × 254 × 39.4cm. Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris

Walter Sickert: Love, Death & Ennui

Until 19 December
Piano Nobile, London

More than 80 works by Sickert are on display here, all from the collection of Herbert and Ann Lucas. These include oils and prints inspired by travels in Dieppe and Venice, and one of five oil versions of his famous vision of repose, *Ennui* (*c.* 1913–14), as well as three etchings of the same scene.

Stan Douglas: *Birth of a Nation* and *The Enemy of All Mankind*

Until 1 November
Victoria Miro, London

This is the European premiere of *Birth of a Nation*, the Canadian artist's latest film installation, which presents clips from D.W. Griffith's notorious white supremacist film of the same name (1915) in a chopped up, distorted fashion. The film is presented alongside several photographs from Douglas's recent series *The Enemy of All Mankind*, which comprises highly staged, theatrical images inspired by *Polly* (1777), the comic opera written by the 18th-century satirist John Gay.

Robert Rauschenberg: Gluts

20 October–22 November
Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris

Inspired by the abandoned cars and rusting gas station signs he saw on a trip to Houston in 1985, Rauschenberg embarked on what would be his last sculpture series, a witty group of assemblages fused from old car parts, stop signs and other scrap metal picked up both in the United States and, later, on a trip to Naples. The series was last seen together in public at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in 2010; the artist's centenary is an apt moment to reunite them.

Chris Huen Sin-kan: The Path and The Fog, Part II

Until 10 November
Matt Carey-Williams,
Porchester Place, London

The Hong Kong-born artist's practice, inspired by the techniques of Chinese ink painting, involves meticulously layering marks of colour on large-scale sheets of paper to create works that appear at once frenzied and composed. The second part of *The Path and the Fog* series, on show here, consists of nine works that draws on everyday life, from dog walks to family breakfasts.

FAIRS IN FOCUS

1-54

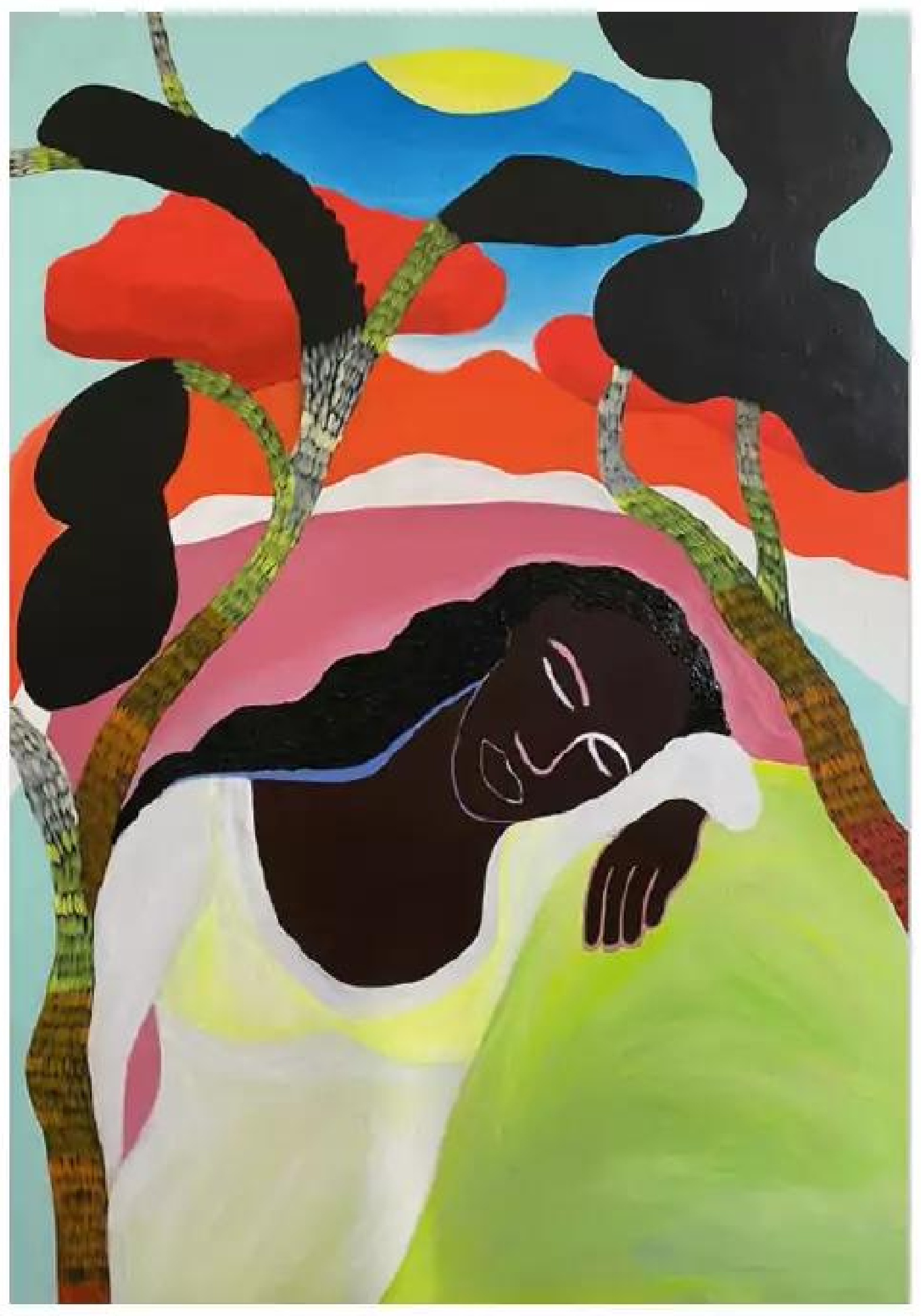
16–19 October
Somerset House, London

More than 50 exhibitors – mostly from the Global South – are returning to Somerset House for the 13th edition of the UK's pre-eminent fair for modern and contemporary African art. Special projects this year include an event curated by Art Comes First, a global collective dedicated to the preservation of African craft through fashion and design.

Highlights International Art Fair

16–19 October
Munich Residenz

The Munich Residenz is once again hosting Highlights, a fair that deals in art and artefacts from antiquity to the present. More than 50 exhibitors are participating this year, showing everything from a 19th-century Russian desk to works by 20th-century artists including Marc Chagall and Josef Albers.



Sleeping Beauty, 2025, Delphine Desane (b. 1988), acrylic and oil on linen, 100 × 70cm. Luce Gallery, on show at 1-54

Photo: Ron Amstutz; © Robert Rauschenberg Foundation/ARS, New York, 2025 / Courtesy Delphine Desane/Luce Gallery; © Delphine Desane

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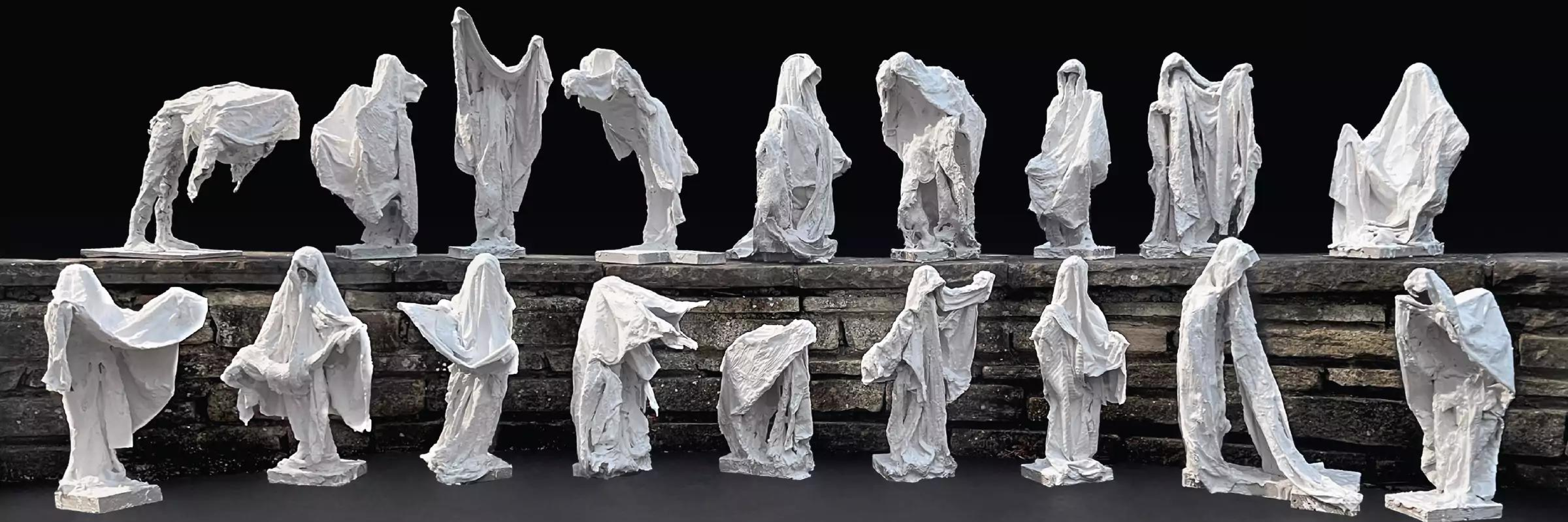

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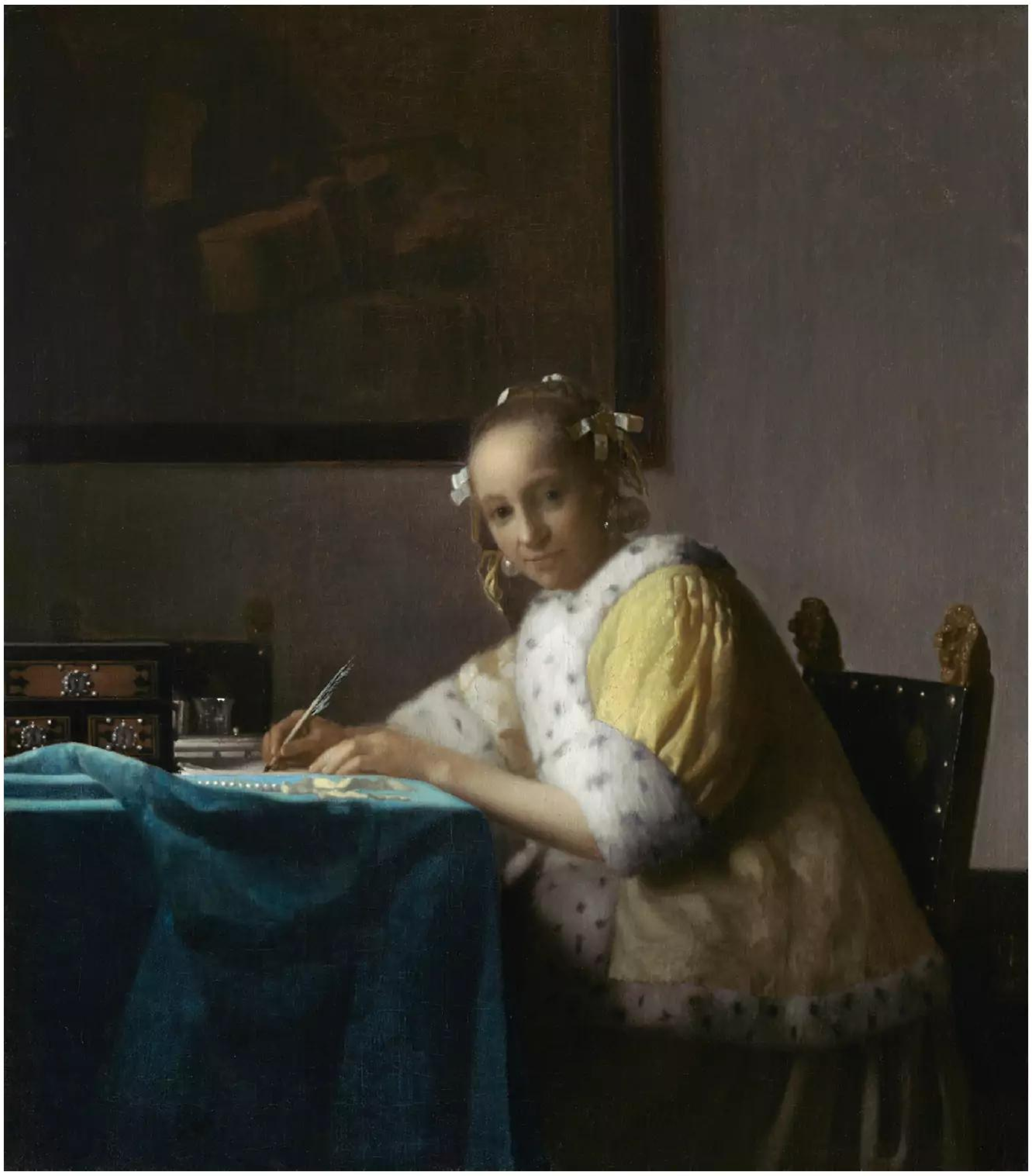
IN PERSPECTIVE

Far from the madding crowd



A Lady Writing, c. 1665, Johannes Vermeer (1632–75), oil on canvas, 45 × 39.9cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

There is plenty of great art to see this month – and some of it can even be found outside the frenzy of London, writes **HETTIE JUDAH**

Dear London Art October,

I need some time apart.

It's been intense (how can I forget your immaculately groomed openings? your shapely sales figures? your unhinged deadlines?). Still, I've started to wonder whether the buzz I feel when you come near me is excitement or churning panic.

For years I've barely questioned what our relationship was doing to my other months. Already, in August, I'd be thinking about you: my body in one month, but my head in another. August is when the art magazines and highbrow glossies get in touch asking me to write about you. Naturally, whatever I write will be little more than guesswork. How can I really know how you'll have changed from one year to the next? Whether you'll surprise me? What we'll talk about once you arrive? What this year's obsession will be? Whether others will bitch about you? (Of course they will.) Which celebrities you will attract? What people should buy? I'd write previews of exhibitions by artists I'd barely heard of and proffer 'insights' into art I'd only seen in an email attachment. You were still months in my future, but every August I'd exploit you. Why not? It's been a lucrative affair.

For years, too, I've been cheating on September with you. As you come closer, the days are filled with intense soothsaying and obsessive prediction. Weeks ahead of time, I'd write guides to special sections at the art fairs and identify the most exciting booths (as best I could from an inbox full of press releases. Which is to say, not in any meaningful way at all). I'd compile round-ups of what I imagined to be the top shows around town. I'd interview the artist awarded that year's Tate Modern Turbine Hall commission. All details would be embargoed ahead of the opening, so the artist would speak only in the vaguest generalisations and the interview would become redundant as soon as the work is revealed. But who cares? So it goes with previews.

I don't flatter myself that it's just me. Most of London's art world spends August and September obsessing about you, desperate for the inside track. Art advisers study advance details of galleries' Frieze London and Frieze

Visitors gathering at Frieze London in 2024

Masters displays, avid as schoolboys memorising Kendrick Lamar lyrics. Long before the fairs open they have charted the thrill-packed routes along which they will walk their attention-deficit/high-net-worth clients. The gallerists, in turn, strive to secure buyers weeks before the preview day (how else can they be sure of covering their fees, shipping, travel and insurance?)

After months of overthinking our relationship, as soon as you arrived I'd be overwhelmed. Everything about you still seemed to take place in the future, but now I'd be thinking minutes, hours, days ahead rather than weeks and months. How to focus on an exhibition if all I could picture was the next deadline or the next unmissable event? The art world around me would be filtered through the anxiety of how it might translate into copy, anecdotes or social media takes. Opinions must be had. Pronouncements made. Judgement passed. (Despite the fact that, afforded marginal attention, most art only ever seems… fine, OK, good, unexciting.)

Your inner sanctum is Frieze London. I'd enter the fair early on the preview day in the hope of scoping out booths before they were veiled by a curtain of air-kissing. The fair would be throbbing with human distractions. Even in a less charged setting there's only so much art I can take in before I lose the ability to process it. Within a few hours, the engaged act of seeing would be replaced by blank-eyed perambulation. Thus, even while I was in the fair, I worried that I was missing out on it. I'd panic that I had not seen the right things, that I had failed to cover the essentials, that I had not received the piece of gossip that would direct me to the one unmissable thing that would compensate for my failure to look correctly. By the close of preview day, I'd have been brainwashed by white LEDs and overpriced pok bowls, unable to recall anything from my eight hours at the fair. The next morning's deadline would shimmer horrifyingly close and, with it, the demand for opinions and analysis. Thank god for Instagram. Late into the night I'd relive the fair through other people's feeds.

London Art October, 'Art' may be your middle name, but I no longer seem to see it. Under your influence, art becomes something to be experienced in the future, or too quickly to take in, or through somebody else's eyes. It becomes ungraspable, impossible to engage with. I'd say we should stop seeing one another, but in truth, I think it's been years since I saw you in any meaningful way at all. I'm taking a break. This year I have done right by my August. I shall float across the surface of September idly trailing a toe along the bottom of my overdraft. Come October, I will be ready to see art – to really *see* art. But this year, I'm seeing it in other cities.

Until next year. Maybe.

Hettie

Photo: Linda Nylind

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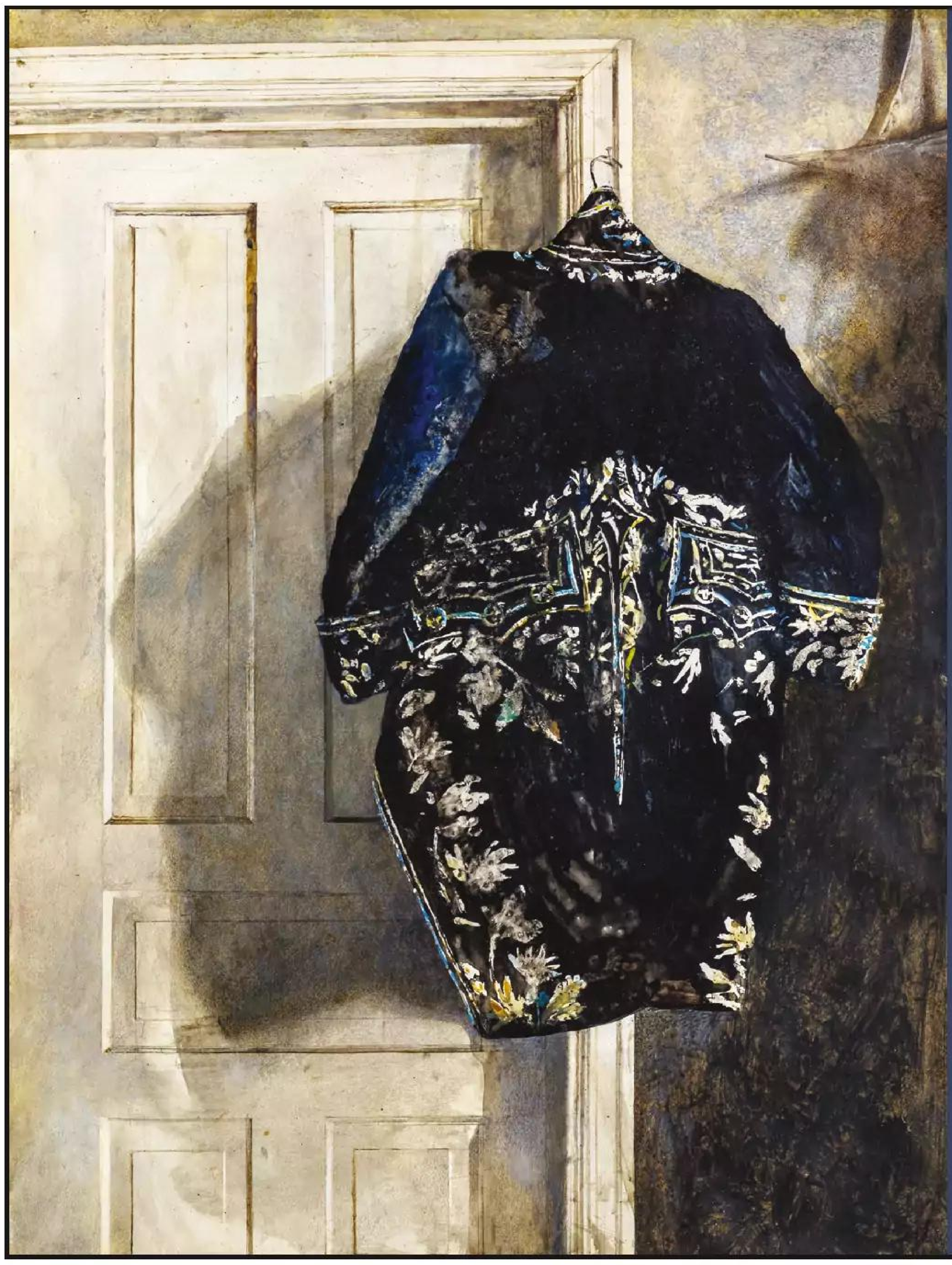

Andrew Wyeth

Stand D11
Frieze Masters
October 15–19, 2025
The Regents Park

Info@schoelkopfgallery.com
(212) 879-8815

Andrew Wyeth (1917–2009) *French Connection* (detail), 1980, watercolor on paper, 27⅜ × 20¾ inches, © Wyeth Foundation for American Art/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

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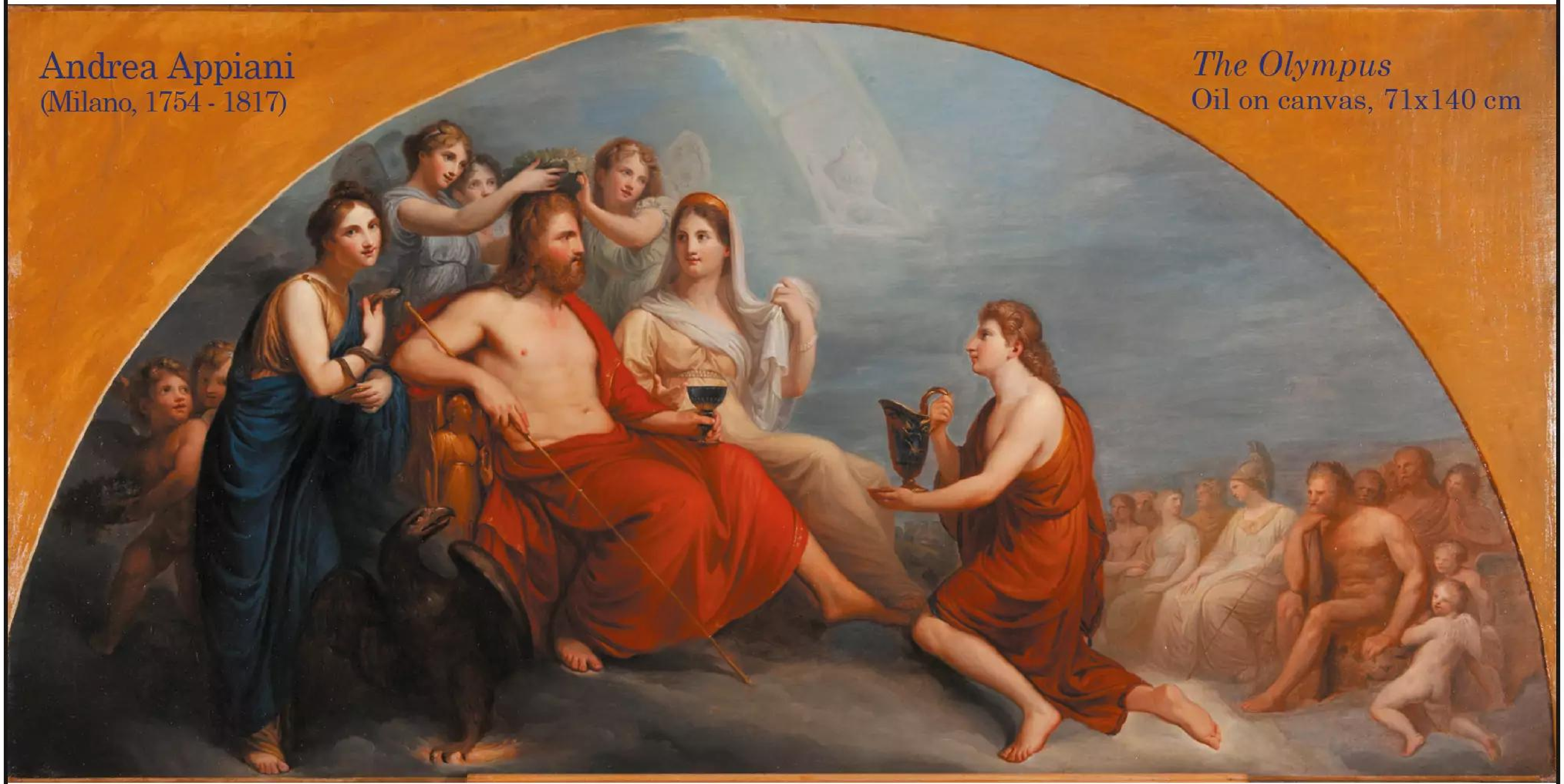

Andrea Appiani
(Milano, 1754 - 1817)

The Olympus
Oil on canvas, 71x140 cm

at Alexis Bordes Gallery 4, rue de la Paix 75002 Paris
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Grave review

The Ramesseum in Luxor, Egypt, built for Ramesses II (r. 1279–1213 BC)

Photo: Alan Lagadu/Getty Images

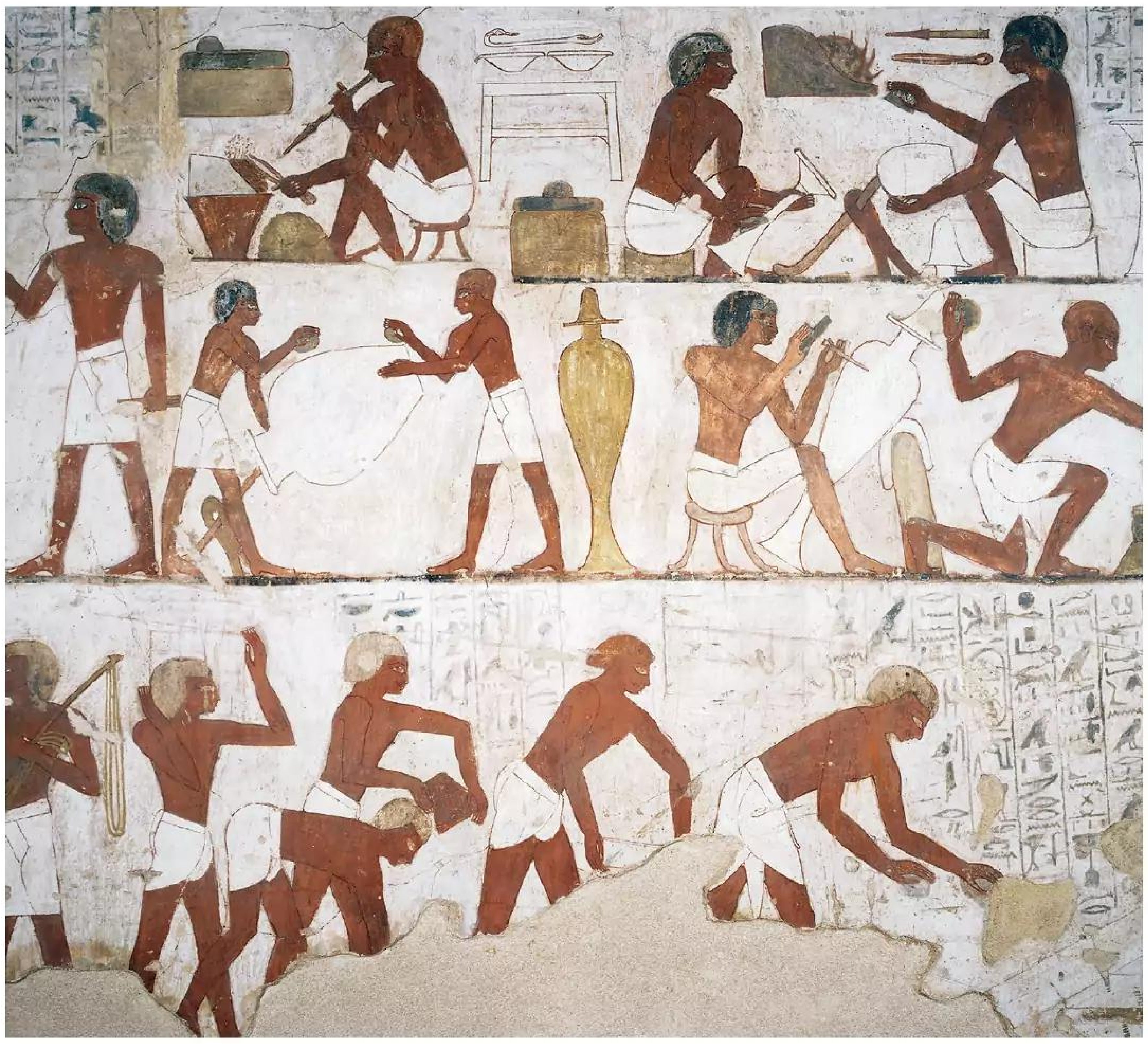
SOPHIE BARLING turns tomb raider in Luxor to marvel at the craftsmanship of ancient Egypt

It's 8.30 in the morning in the Valley of the Kings and, along with the temperature, anticipation is rising among our small group of journalists. We are at the entrance to one of the 62 confirmed royal tombs in these arid hills on the west side of the Nile, the necropolis of ancient Thebes. Since the 19th century the tombs have been numbered in order of their (re)discovery – 'KV62', the burial place of Tutankhamun, being the last to be uncovered, in 1922. This one, 'KV57', unearthed in 1908 by Edward Ayrton, was made for the pharaoh Horemheb (reigned *c.* 1319–1292 BC), who had been the boy king's general. Only a handful of these tombs are open to the public at any one time; Horemheb's has long been closed for restoration and conservation after flood damage, but we have been granted special access. A key is produced, padlock and chain are negotiated; the door is opened, a switch flicked in a fuse box, and a long descent illuminated.

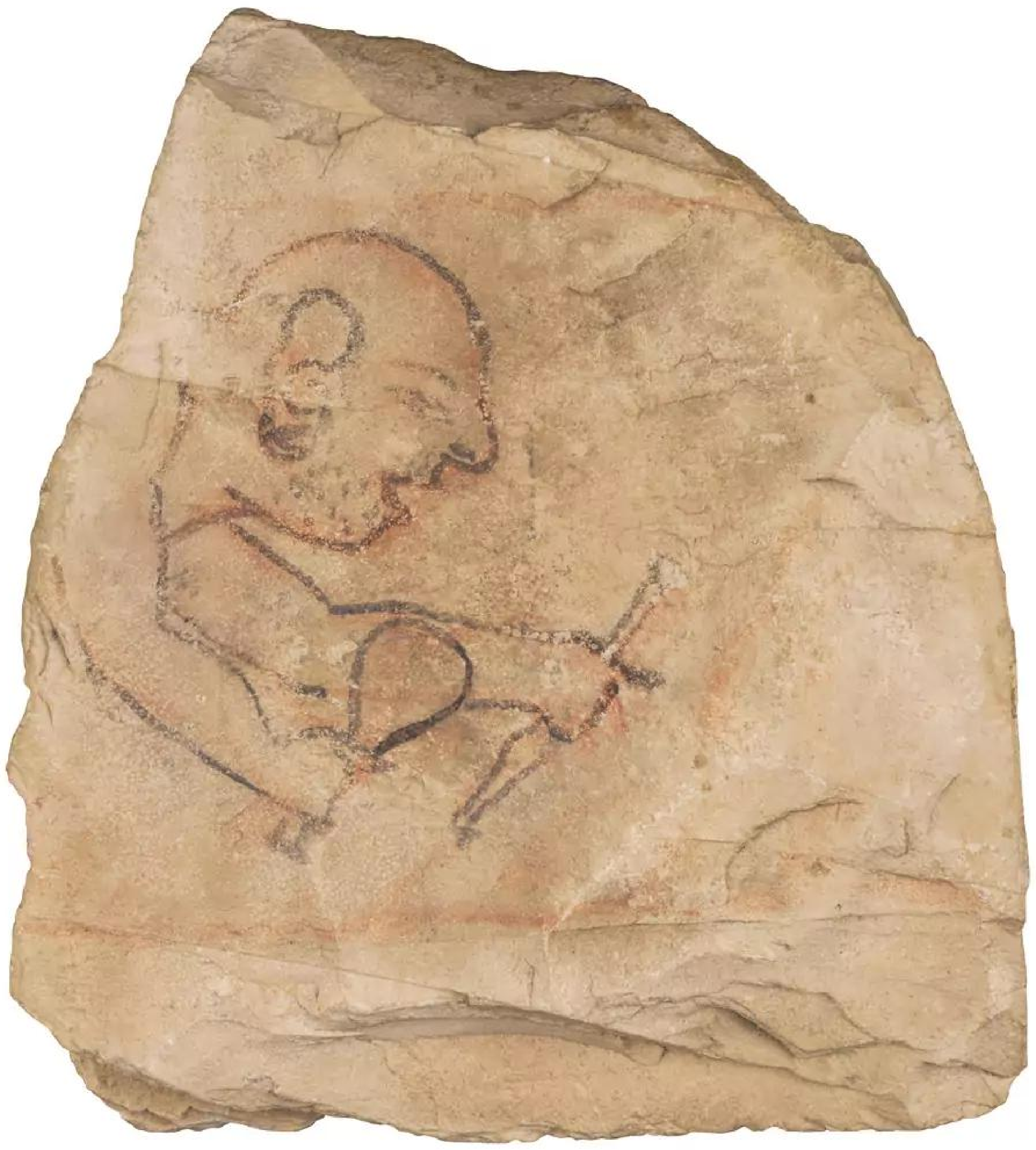
We are here ahead of the Fitzwilliam Museum's exhibition 'Made in Ancient Egypt' (3 October–12 April 2026), which focuses on the craftsmen (and occasionally women) responsible for the decorations and objects within these tombs. Two of the museum's Egyptologists, Neal Spencer and Helen Strudwick (curator of the exhibition), are our guides, and why they particularly want us to see the tomb of Horemheb becomes clear once we reach the pharaoh's burial chamber. First, though, like Hollywood-style archaeologists, we must confront some ancient tomb-raider deterrents. 'Although we think of Tutankhamun's tomb as an "intact" burial,' Spencer explains, 'it was actually robbed three times pretty soon after the burial took place, and then tidied up and resealed. Theft was rampant.' The tomb of Horemheb, who ascended the throne only a few years after King Tut's death, attempted to avoid that. After a vertiginous descent, long enough to contemplate what an extraordinary feat of engineering this was, we arrive at a chamber whose floor drops away suddenly – a surprise for any would-be robbers.

Happily there is a modern bridge to carry us safely across this well shaft and from which we can admire the decorations around the chamber: on the ceiling, yellow stars against a blue-grey ground, which continues down the walls, where the king, identifiable by his striped *nemes* headdress with rearing cobra, is shown making offerings to various deities associated with the underworld: Osiris, Horus, Isis, Anubis, Hathor. These figures, and accompanying hieroglyphs, have been carved in bas-relief and then painted – a new departure at this point in royal tomb decoration, where previously scenes had only been painted.

We walk through a door that had originally been bricked up, plastered over and painted – the intention being to make it seem like the end of the tomb (a decoy that failed even in antiquity). Descending further down, we finally reach the burial chamber. This might feel like an anticlimax if you're a tourist looking for eye-catching Instagram material, for there is almost no colour here – but for scholars this is a gift of a room: the decoration is unfinished, the intended schemes sketched in black and red, with occasional sections starting to be carved out. (The mummification process for a pharaoh took 70 days; if the tomb was not completed by the time the sarcophagus was in place, too bad – it had to be sealed.) 'What we can see,' Strudwick explains, 'is that an outline draughtsman would come in, probably working from an



Scenes of potters and other craftsmen at work from a wall painting, 1504–1425 BC, in the tomb of Rekhmire, Qurna, Egypt



Sketch of a stonemason, 1295–1186 BC, limestone, 14.8 × 13.5 × 2.7cm. Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge

ostracon [a fragment of inscribed limestone or pottery] which would tell him what was meant to be here, and he would do the red lines, and then either the same artist or a different one would come in and overlay the black lines, and it's the black lines that are then cut into the surface.'

Among the sketched figures is the ram-headed nocturnal form of the sun god Ra, travelling in his solar boat through the underworld until his 'rebirth' at dawn. The coils of a serpent form a protective shield around him as he travels. Snakes, in fact, are everywhere – forming horizontal and vertical borders, spitting fire, or lined up as repeated hooded cobras. These and other scenes are episodes from the funerary text known as the Book of Gates, which sets out the passage of a newly deceased soul with the sun god through the underworld towards resurrection. Knowledge of the necessary 'spells' at each of the 12 guarded 'gates' was 'essentially a passport to the afterlife', as Spencer puts it, and Horemheb's is the first tomb to illustrate them. The fact that the artists involved in carving and painting these scenes by necessity had access to that knowledge gave them an unusual level of privilege (and literacy) – even if they never employed the Book of Gates in the decoration of their own tombs. 'These texts are highly restricted,' Spencer says, 'and, until the end of the New Kingdom when you start having papyri with them, they're not shown anywhere except Valley of the Kings tombs – even the queens of Egypt didn't have this text in their tombs.'

As we emerge from this underworld, squinting through the sun god's fierce glare, talk turns to working conditions while these tombs were being made. 'They did four hours in the morning, and four in the afternoon with a break in between,' Strudwick says. 'There's a sketch [on a limestone ostracon, in the exhibition] of a man with a mallet and chisel, and I always imagine someone sitting in a bit of shade on a break, sketching a fellow craftsman. For me this is the place where we meet these people – while we're here and struggling with the heat ourselves. It was challenging work.' (Strudwick knows something about operating in high temperatures, having worked on and off on Theban excavations since coming here as a student in the 1970s. On the road to the Valley of the Kings from our hotel we pass Howard Carter's old house, where, she says, 'we used to go and play table tennis with the [antiquities] inspectors who were staying there'.)

At the end of a day's toil in the Valley of the Kings these workers would walk south over the hill back to Deir el-Medina, a walled settlement purpose-built by the state for artisans of the royal tombs and their families. It functioned as such for some four centuries, more or less coinciding with the period of the New Kingdom (*c.* 1550–1069 BC). The site was mostly excavated by French archaeologists in the early 20th century, which revealed not only 70-odd small houses but many thousands of texts on scraps of limestone – the ancient Egyptian Post-it note. 'These ostraca record everything,' Spencer explains, 'from the sale of a coffin or orders for a window to divorce proceedings and libel cases.' Some of them document orders of water from the Nile valley – Deir el-Medina's necessary proximity to the Valley of the Kings makes it, unusually for a settlement, an inconvenient distance from the river. But that drawback has been posterity's gain: the dryness of this desert environment has ensured this trove of ostraca's excellent state of preservation. Not far from here we visit the tomb of Rekhmire (*c.* 1504–1425 BC), vizier under Thutmosis III and Amenhotep II; its lofty walls are busy with painted figures engaged in the kinds of activities he oversaw in life: carpenters, metalworkers, ceramicists, brickmakers, men on scaffolding working on the kind of colossal statue whose remains can be seen at the mortuary temples of Ramesses II or Amenhotep III. This is the Egyptian machine working efficiently. The texts from Deir el-Medina, meanwhile, tell the other side to this story: broken chisels, fights, absences due to an animal bite, or a funeral, or a hangover. Glimpses of humanity here come courtesy of the makers behind the marvels.

Sophie Barling is senior editor of Apollo.

'Made in Ancient Egypt' is at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, from 3 October –12 April 2026 (www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk).

Photo: DeAgostini/Getty Images; Photo © The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge

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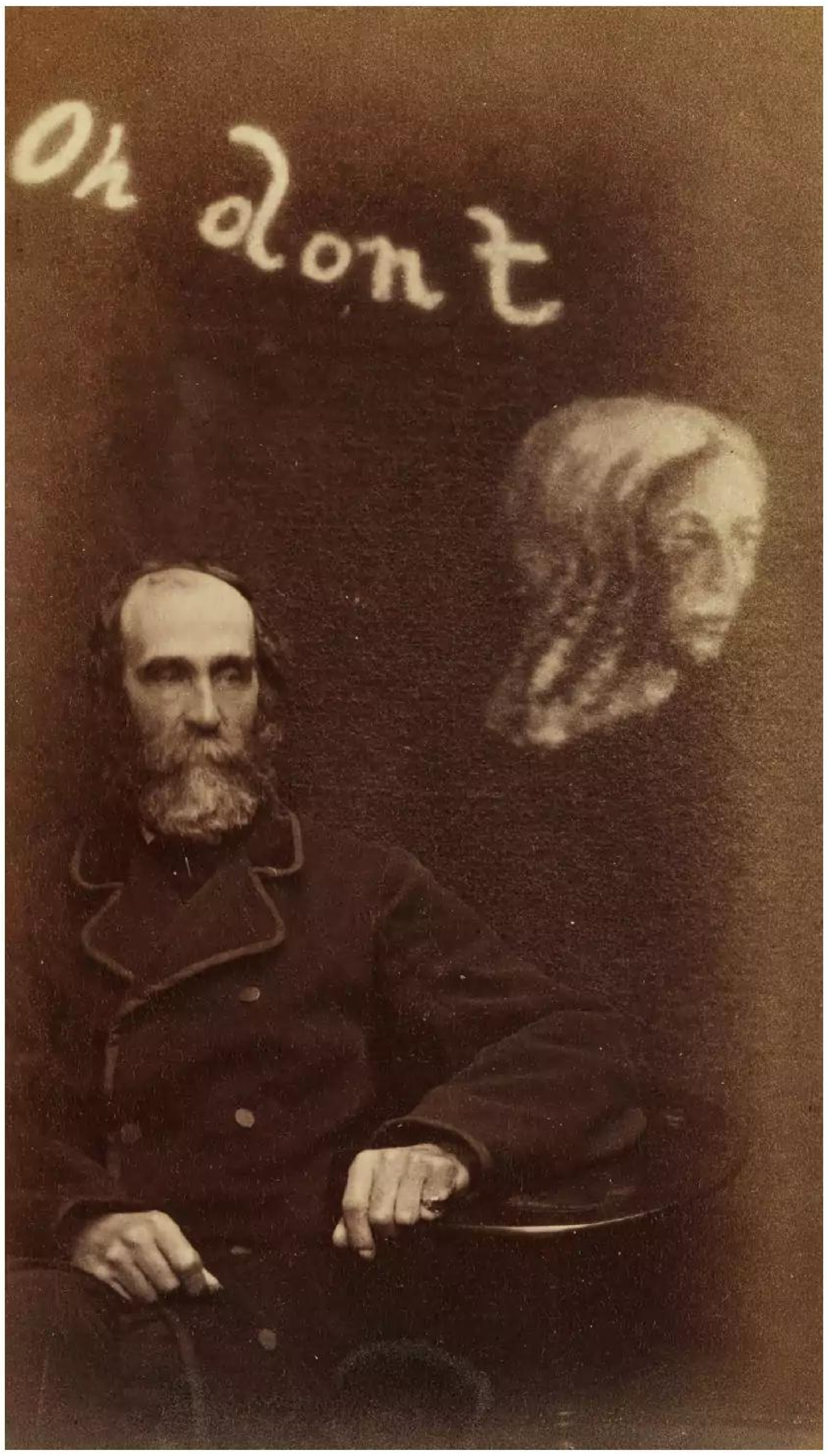
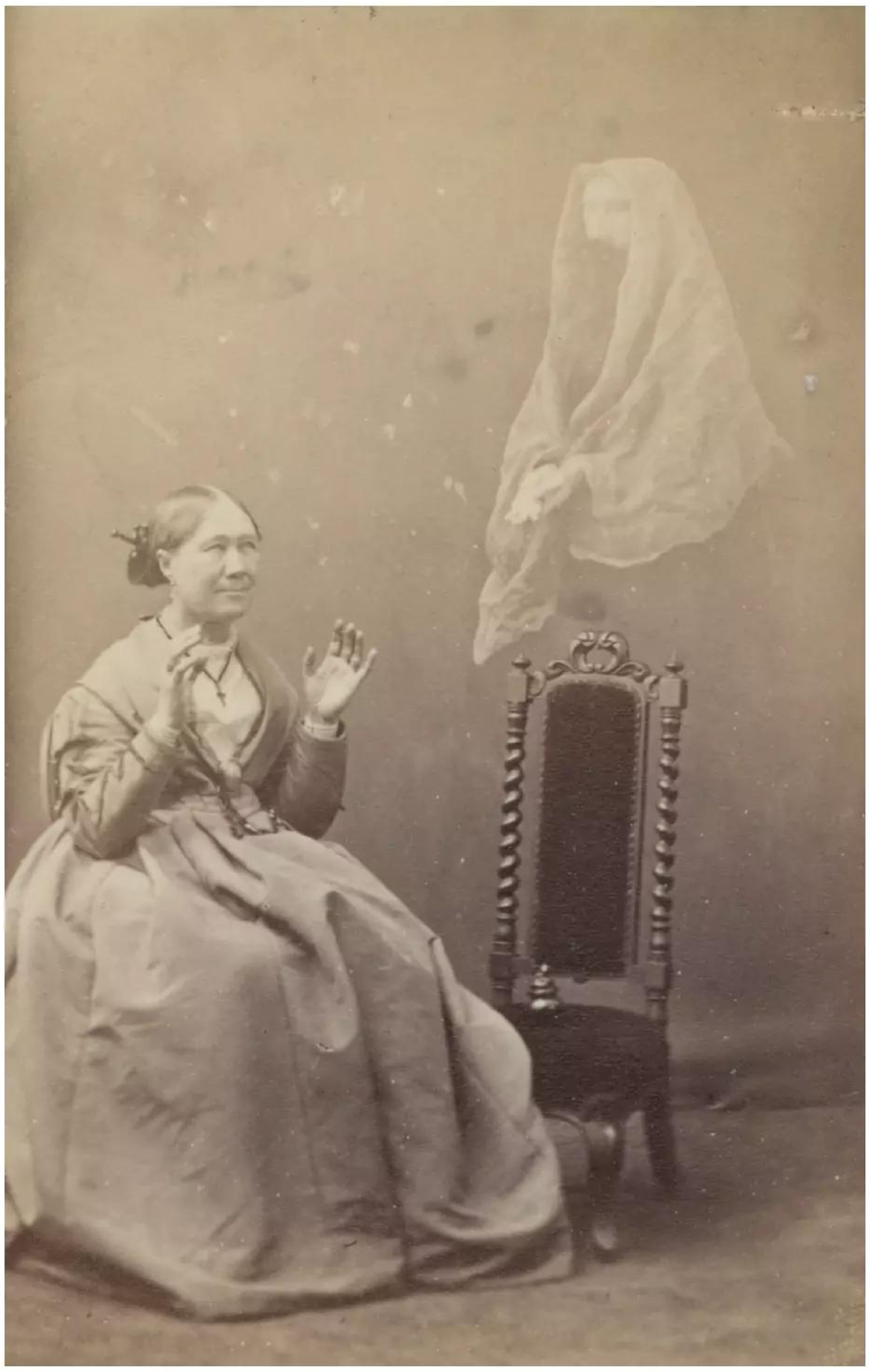
DIARY

That’s the spirit!



Oh dont, Unknown man with spirit writing, 1874, F.M. Parkes and Reeves, albumen silver print, 10.5 × 6.4cm. Collection of the College of Psychic Studies, London



Georgiana Houghton with a Spirit, c. 1874, Frederick Hudson, albumen print, 10.4 × 6.3cm. Institut für Grenzgebiete der Psychologie und Psychohygiene, Freiburg im Breisgau

Photo: The College of Psychic Studies, London / © Institut für Grenzgebiete der Psychologie und Psychohygiene, Freiburg im Breisgau

STEPHEN PATIENCE on ghostly apparitions in Victorian photography

It started off, appropriately enough, with an unexplained phenomenon. In 1862, the Boston jewellery engraver and amateur photographer William H. Mumler took several self-portraits, and upon developing them discovered in one a diaphanous hint of a second figure – even though he had been entirely alone in his studio. His first instinct was that he had not thoroughly cleaned the glass photographic plate before reusing it. Entirely plausible, and almost certainly the case; but Mumler then consulted a leading advocate of the popular Spiritualist movement, who assured him that he had succeeded in photographing some sort of spectral emanation.

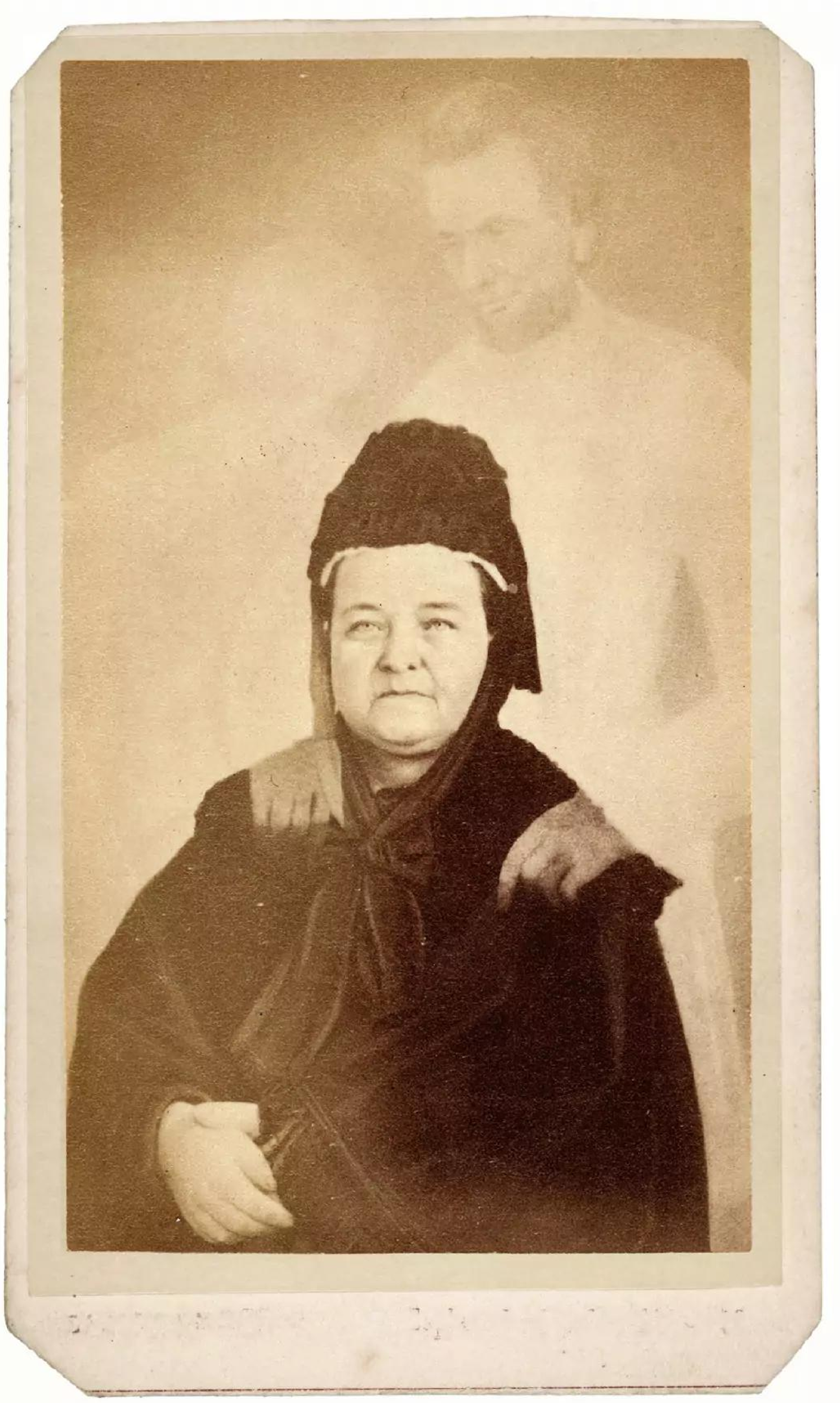
Thus ‘spirit photography’ was born – not quite the material of autumnal fireside ghost stories, but pleasingly uncanny and unsettling in its own way. Mumler and his numerous imitators soon set themselves up in business as photographic conduits to the deceased. The images, as a rule, were the kind of staid portraits associated with early photography, but also miraculously in the frame were ghostly apparitions of deceased relatives – sometimes resting their hands on the sitters’ shoulders, sometimes barely more than a spooky smear. Almost, one might think, like a double exposure was involved. Indeed, it’s likely that there were some photos created in this way, but since the sitter would need to be present for both exposures (to ensure that they didn’t become see-through too), it might have looked a little obvious what was going on when an assistant draped in a winding sheet came on set for the second shot. More often, spirit photographers would have created the effect by overlaying a second glass plate while developing the picture (having carefully quizzed the sitter in advance and selected a spectral figure with the required features).

Mumler charged $10 for a session – some 40 times the going rate for an ordinary portrait – but even then could not guarantee that the spirits would be ‘in attendance’. As a result, his clients tended towards the wealthier strata of society, most famously Mary Todd Lincoln, widow of the assassinated president, whom he photographed apparently receiving a shoulder massage from a translucent Honest Abe.

Therein, perhaps, lies the key to spirit photography’s mysterious popularity. Spiritualism was at its peak in the 1860s, but hung around like a restless wraith until well into the 1920s.

It is easy to understand why it might have provided some kind of solace in the era of the American Civil War, when some 700,000 people were killed far away from their loved ones. (There is at least one instance of a woman being photographed with the 'spirit' of her deceased brother, only for him to come marching home again, entirely alive, shortly afterwards.) In Britain, too, it was hard to escape reminders of those who had passed on. Mourning clothes were especially prominent, fashionable even, in the wake of Prince Albert's death in 1861 – Queen Victoria wore hers for the next 40 years, considerably longer than normal etiquette dictated. Amid such constant memento mori, the idea of making contact with the other side would have seemed reassuring, whether by means of tapping tables at a séance or a photographic shoot with an ethereal presence – and the Spiritualist movement gave it the superficial sheen of a rational system of beliefs.

It is all too easy – lazy, even – to dismiss the Victorians as credulous ninnies, unable to detect what to the eyes of 21st-century sophisticates are blatant examples of camera trickery. But to do so is to paint the 19th century, an era of relentless scientific and technological advance, as backward and primitive. Certainly, many were taken in by spirit photographs, not least because they *wanted* to believe; but photography was a comparatively new, ahem, medium, so few people were yet aware of what it was possible to achieve in a darkroom. Many of the keystones of scientific advance, too, were invisible to the naked eye, from electric current to Pasteur's germ theory, so the notion that cameras might be capable of recording such things was not without plausibility. Indeed, it was given extra impetus with Wilhelm Röntgen's discovery of X-rays in 1895; the ensuing photographs – of the bones in his wife's hands, for instance – must, at first, have seemed even more outlandish than any double exposure of a woman wearing a sheet could hope to be.



Mary Todd Lincoln with the spirit of her husband, President Abraham Lincoln, 1870–75, William H. Mumler, albumen print on cardboard, 10.4 × 6.2cm. Institut für Grenzgebiete der Psychologie und Psychohygiene, Freiburg im Breisgau

Not everybody at the time was taken in by this chicanery. Plenty were well aware that spirit photographers were closer to confidence tricksters than exponents of the scientific arts. In 1869 Mumler stood trial in New York for fraud and larceny, with the great showman P.T. Barnum – no stranger himself to ripping off an easy mark – testifying against him. As evidence, Barnum engaged a professional (non-spirit) photographer to create a portrait of him with the eerie visage of Lincoln faintly discernible behind him, like a wallpaper Shroud of Turin. Experts for the prosecution cited nine separate methods that might have been used to fake pictures of the deceased. In the end, however, Mumler was acquitted, seemingly on the grounds that it was impossible to prove beyond reasonable doubt that he had used trickery as opposed to genuinely capturing phantasms on camera.

Leaving aside the circumstances of their creation, today spirit photographs have something of the appeal of outsider art. It is hard to believe they were ever taken seriously, but nevertheless there is something compelling about rigid, dour Victorians juxtaposed with floating heads that resemble Robert Freeman's sleeve art for *With the Beatles*, or nebulous shapes that veer on abstraction. A selection of pictures by Mumler and his contemporaries can be viewed as part of the exhibition 'Ghosts: Visualizing the Supernatural' currently running at the Kunstmuseum Basel. Here you can see haunting apparitions galore, ectoplasm, 'the development stage of a spirit form' and more than a few images that now seem more comical than at first intended. An example by the British studio of F.M. Parkes features a hirsute sitter haunted, like Belshazzar, by a spooky graffito: the unpunctuated phrase 'oh dont' in a Tippex-like cursive above his head. Spirits were almost certainly involved in its creation – but most likely of the chemical kind, at the development stage.

'Ghosts: Visualizing the Supernatural' is at the Kunstmuseum Basel until 8 March 2026.

Stephen Patience is a freelance writer.

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MARCHANT

EST 1925

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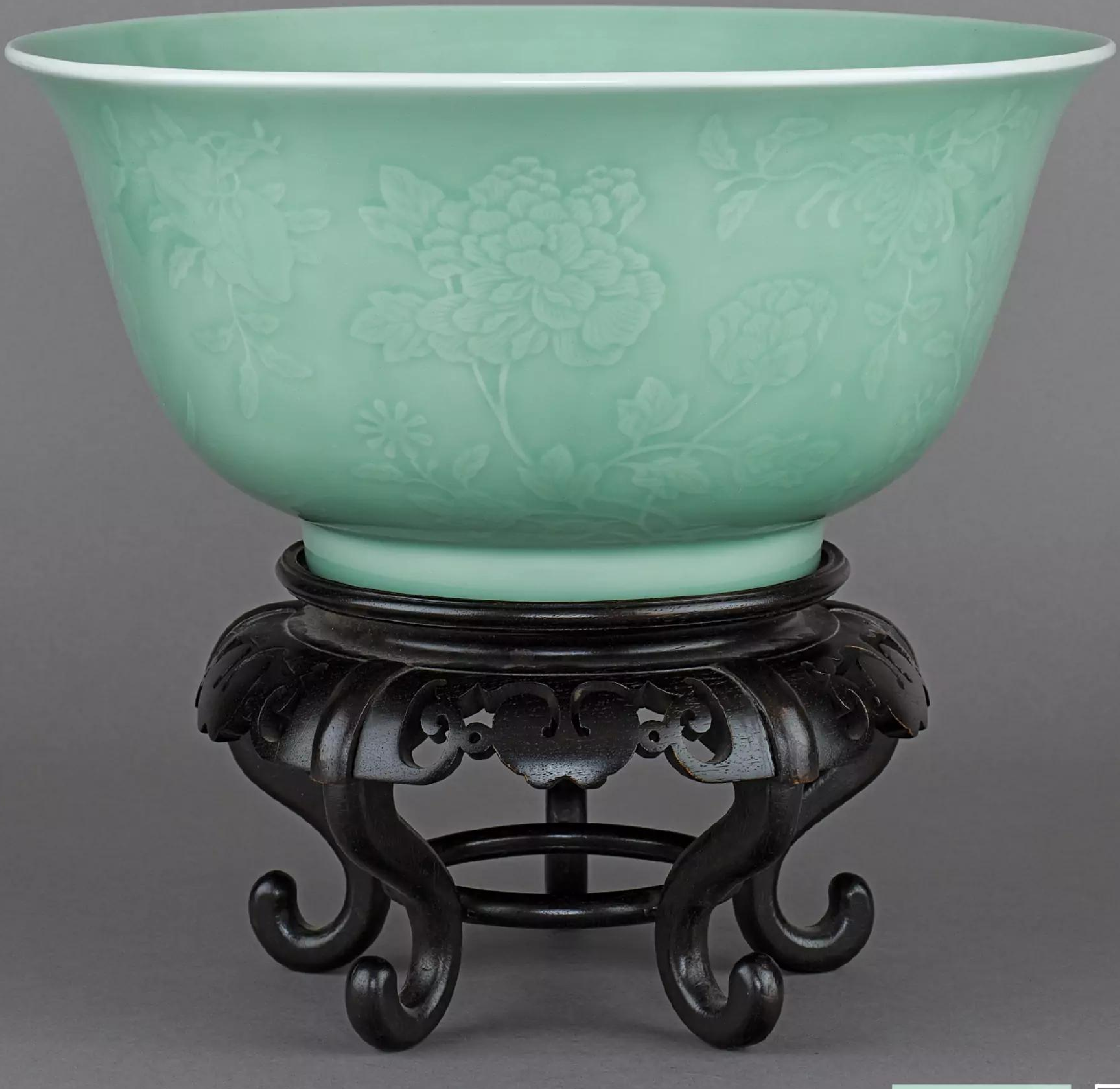

Chinese imperial porcelain large celadon-glazed deep bowl, *wan*,
carved with sprays of fruits and flowers and covered in a luminous glaze.
Six-character Qianlong sealmark and of the period, 1736–1795.
13 1/4 inches, 33.8 cm diameter.

* Dr. Ho-Ching and Mme. Von Sung Yang, acquired 1939–1955.

* Sold by Sotheby's New York, *Important Chinese Art*, 23 September 2020, lot 532.

* The decoration of pomegranate, *shiliu*, peach, *tao*, and finger citron, *fushou*, forms the rebus *fushou sanduo*, blessings, sons and longevity, with addded lychee, *lizhi*, symbolising both sons and cleverness.

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Installation view of 'Pain Couture' at the Fondation Cartier in 2004

The opening of the Fondation Cartier in 1984 changed the French art world and heralded a new era of powerful private institutions. Will its new space, a stone's throw from the Louvre, upset the balance of Paris's museum landscape even further?

Change of scene

BY CATHERINE BENNETT

For 40 years, the Fondation Cartier has been moving closer to the heart of Paris. Its first home was in the south-western suburb of Jouy-en-Josas, in a 19th-century chateau set in a 14-hectare park. In 1994 it moved to a glass and steel monolith designed by the architect Jean Nouvel on Boulevard Raspail in the 14th arrondissement. This year, the foundation has outgrown its home yet again and has moved into the centre of the snail's shell of a map of the city's arrondissements, where the Louvre is its closest neighbour. Its new site is a vast Haussmannian building that used to be a shopping centre, flanked by the five-star Hôtel du Louvre and France's Supreme Court. Gold lettering above the elegant limestone arcades spells out the name of the institution, with the word 'Cartier' in the brand's curling serif. When it opens at the end of this month, the Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain will undoubtedly be a central part of the city's cultural landscape.

The Fondation Cartier came into being in 1984 with an unprecedented funding model and an experimental, anything-goes approach to exhibitions. It was the brainchild of Cartier's president, Alain Dominique Perrin, who wanted to create a hub for contemporary art that would support emerging artists. At the time, *Le Monde* called its creation 'an event', adding wryly that the project lacked neither ambition nor capital. At the opening night, the sculptor César unveiled a series of welded iron pieces, including a colossal abstract work-in-progress, *Hommage à Eiffel*, alongside works by the Canadian-British artist Lisa Milroy and the British artist Julian Opie; for both it was their first time exhibiting abroad.

'The foundation's opening was a defining moment in France's artistic and intellectual life,' says Jack Lang, who was the French culture minister at the time and present at the opening. 'There have been similar initiatives since, but [Perrin] had the audacity, the courage and the imagination to create it.'

Private art collections being exhibited in public is, and was, nothing new in France. Wealthy individuals have long bequeathed their collections to the state, resulting in house museums such as the Musée Jacquemart-André and the Musée Marmottan Monet in Paris. But this was the first time a private company – a luxury brand, no less – decided to inject its own money into contemporary art, nine years before the Fondazione Prada in Milan, 22 years before the French billionaire François Pinault presented his collection in Venice (after failing to secure a venue in France), and 30 years before the Fondation Louis Vuitton opened its Frank Gehry-designed temple of modern art on the fringes of Paris.

'There was to be no confusion between pure and generous artistic action and commercial activity. This was, and remains, the very cornerstone of the Fondation's credibility,' wrote Perrin in *Voir Venir, Venir Voir*, a book published for the 40th anniversary. The Fondation Cartier does not publish operating figures and declined to give details of its financial activity for this article. Although the Fondation Cartier is careful to make the distinction between the company's commercial activities and its cultural arm, it is evident that the financial backing of the Maison Cartier has allowed it to take more risks and be ambitious in its choice of artists and artworks – such as choosing two unknown British artists for its inaugural show, or putting on the first large retrospective of the Colombian artist Olga de Amaral in Europe in 2024.

Photo: © Stefano Pandini; © Jean Paul Gaultier

The Velvet Underground performing at the opening of 'Andy Warhol System: Pub-Pop-Rock' at the Fondation Cartier's former location in Jouy-en-Josas in 1990

Photo: © Xavier Lambours

'Museums didn't do what we were doing at the time,' Jean de Loisy, a curator at the Fondation Cartier in the early 1990s, told me. 'There is no comparison with other foundations like Louis Vuitton, Pernod Ricard and Luma… The Fondation Cartier has a very unique model. It has always weaved together worlds that traditionally don't belong to the world of contemporary art and included fields that aren't considered "high art".'

That mixing of different fields is how a fleet of shiny red Ferraris decorated the lawns of the foundation in Jouy-en-Josas in 1987 in the show 'Hommage à Ferrari', each car standing in as the basket of a hot-air balloon, the billowing white canvases looking like mushrooms poking up through the trees. It was also the setting for a long-awaited reunion of the original line-up of the Velvet Underground, on 15 June 1990, when they performed at the opening of an Andy Warhol exhibition. 'It was an extraordinary moment,' de Loisy says. 'They hadn't played together in 15 years. They were staring stonily at each other the whole time. But it was an amazing event for anyone who had lived through the Warhol era, the modern American era.' In 2004, the fashion designer Jean Paul Gaultier transformed the Fondation's glass tower into a sort of sartorial bakery for the exhibition 'Pain Couture', creating a series of his corseted silhouettes entirely out of baguettes and loaves of bread.

The Fondation Cartier also looked beyond established names. Its artist's residency programme in Jouy-en-Josas was a finishing school for artists such as Fabrice Hyber, Huang Yong Ping – a dissident artist who left China after the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989 – and the Congolese artist Chéri Samba, all of whom continued to produce works for the Fondation afterwards. However, it wasn't always easy to convince artists to work with a foundation linked to a luxury brand. 'It was very different to now,' de Loisy explains. 'The art world was suspicious about private patrons. At the time, artists were a lot more concerned about ethics, and more distrustful of capitalism. Nowadays, artists are used to the world of business, where capitalism plays a powerful role.'

When the work of a young artist is bought by one of France's billionaire collectors – François Pinault for his collection at the Bourse de Commerce, or Bernard Arnault for the Fondation Louis Vuitton – the star of its maker rises, and the value of their work with it. But the relationship between the brand and the artist goes both ways.

'Luxury needs this link to the world of culture, because that is what gives it its nobility, its legitimacy, its roots,' says Jean-Michel Tobelem, a professor of management at the Sorbonne and expert in cultural policy. French luxury brands earn their value because of the indelible association consumers make between their products and a romantic vision of the French capital and its *art de vivre*. 'Louis Vuitton and Cartier need their brand to be associated with contemporary creators, to show that the brand is alive – it's not just products from the past.'

A consequence of private entities dipping their toes into the art world is that public museums simply can't compete with the cheque book of Arnault or Pinault. 'For the Musée d'Orsay or the Centre Pompidou to do the same kinds of exhibitions as the Fondation Louis Vuitton, they would need to be able to put more than €10 million on the table, which French public institutions aren't able to do,' Tobelem says. Many private institutions tread the same ground as their public counterparts – and often make a bigger splash. The David Hockney retrospective, which has just ended at the Fondation Louis Vuitton, is the artist's largest ever, but it comes eight years after a retrospective at the Centre Pompidou (at the

The Fondation Cartier's new building at Place du Palais-Royal, Paris

time the fullest to date) that was financially feasible because it was a collaboration with Tate Britain and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

The phenomenon of blockbuster exhibitions of work by the world's most famous living artists is a fairly new one. The French state was not always so welcoming to private interlopers – so much so that the Fondation Cartier was effectively operating outside a legal framework when it first opened, initially financing shows by dipping into the Maison Cartier's advertising budget and risking a slap on the wrist from France's corporate tax authorities. After the publication of a report extolling the virtues of private patronage – financed by the Maison Cartier – the government adopted a law creating a legal framework for private foundations. But despite this, Pinault's original plan to situate his collection in Boulogne-Billancourt, just outside of Paris, was stymied by red tape and a lack of enthusiasm from local authorities. Miffed, he packed up his idea and took it to Venice, where he bought the Palazzo Grassi for the display of his collection in 2005 and the Punta della Dogana two years later.

French attitudes have certainly changed since then. In 2003, the former culture minister – and first director of the Palazzo Grassi – Jean-Jacques Aillagon lent his name to a law that boosted private funding of cultural activities by offering generous tax breaks of up to 75 per cent for individuals and 60 per cent for companies that support the arts. That paved the way for the flourishing of private foundations.

'Often in France, we go from one extreme to the other. It's the enthusiasm of the newly converted,' Tobelem says. 'France has gone very far with offering fiscal advantages, which are now more than what you get in the United States. And paradoxically, the public sector is shooting itself in the foot, because people think private sponsorship is great, but actually this private funding is being partially paid for by the taxpayer.' A stark illustration of this is the tax break that the LVMH group got for building the Fondation Louis Vuitton. The building cost a staggering €790 million – but, thanks to its creation, the group managed to reduce its taxes by €518.1 million between 2007 and 2017.

Not only are private foundations fiscally advantageous, but they are also a promotional tool for the brands behind them. There's another layer to the arrangement: whereas luxury brands may make philanthropic donations to public museums, often that money is now diverted to their own foundations, where they can get a bigger return.

The Louvre, meanwhile, is nervously eyeing up its new neighbour. In a leaked letter from the Louvre's director Laurence des Cars to the culture ministry in January, she highlighted the 'success' of the Bourse de Commerce and the opening of the Fondation Cartier's new site, which have 'profoundly changed the appearance, appeal and perception of the area'. Next to the grandeur of the Fondation Cartier's new building (once again designed by Jean Nouvel), the Louvre's dilapidated, peeling walls, leaks and temperature-control issues that put artworks at risk of serious damage are in even starker contrast.

The Fondation Cartier declined to talk about its competitors. 'Visitors don't think about competition. There's a richer cultural offer in this area, which is good for visitors and artists alike,' said the foundation's collections director Grazia Quaroni. 'The most important thing is that now contemporary art is everywhere in Paris – it's in museums, it's in the street, and that's what's exciting.'

Catherine Bennett is a freelance journalist who divides her time between Paris and Venice.

Photo: © Martin Argyroglo

Shock of the mews

GILLIAN DARLEY outlines the occasionally scandalous history of the London mews house

Georgian cities were mostly about appearances. Fashionable London townhouses in areas presided over by enormous estates presented a scene of unhurried wealth and high style, but were largely theatrical set pieces for frequently absent residents and owners. From the early 18th century onwards, 'back of house' to the handsome squares that dominated the smart urban scene was a narrow lane lined by brick cottages, used for carriages and horses, with basic accommodation for staff. Within a century, many of those lofty houses in front had fallen on hard times while the regions behind them had tended to degenerate too.

While those five-storey houses in areas such as Bloomsbury or Bayswater did not long live up to their promise, by the mid 20th century some of those neat little 'back of house' cottages, with space beneath, had much more potential. Front and back were reversing roles: if a tall townhouse no longer suited lives or pockets, attractive houses of modest dimensions became highly desirable and, for a moment, even affordable.

The term 'mews' – from the French *muer*, 'to moult' – originates in the King's Mews, which was established in the late 14th century at Charing Cross (on the site currently occupied by the National Gallery); it was here that the royal hawks used for hunting were kept while they shed their plumage. When the building was destroyed by fire in 1534, it was rebuilt as stables, but retained the name 'Mews' – hence the equestrian association with the term thereafter.

The inconspicuous pattern of mews houses slotted in along the rear of many a hefty terrace has been a gift to the wider fabric of London. They have proven readily adaptable to the changing habits, manners and demographics of the city. In the early 20th century, the motor car was stabled where once the horse had been. The mews offered private off-street garaging but soon, too, the invaluable local asset of motor mechanic businesses. The capital's first petrol pump was installed in Queen's Gate Mews in 1913. Much as central London railway arches and substructure encouraged a revival in small-scale affordable workshops, so surplus mews space became a lifeline for trades in a mixed economy.

As time passed, and car ownership in the city fell, those garages and their upstairs quarters were gradually cannibalised, sometimes for studio-offices, sometimes for further accommodation. As before, the value of the mews lay in its adaptability and seemliness. Architectural students in the 1960s and '70s would learn that Le Corbusier's 1920s workers' housing project in Pessac, Bordeaux, had been modified and personalised in cheerful flouting of its ostensible modernism; similarly London mews houses, initially so functional, have taken on the tone and characteristics of their neighbourhood. Around Harley Street and Wimpole Street the tendency has been to deny those modest, functional origins, whether with bijoux colour schemes or the *folie de grandeur* of over-scaled neo-Georgian doorcases or chunky sash windows – escapees from the filmic worlds of Jane Austen or Miss Marple.

Grosvenor Square introduced London to the mews in around 1720, though almost a century earlier Inigo Jones's Italianate plaza at Covent Garden (for the Bedford estate) included an embryonic version. Grosvenor Square offered a complete grid of rear-access lanes, usefully housing carts, carriages and horses and those who serviced them. As Mark Girouard noted, the mews were the external equivalent of the backstairs that had crept into the domestic plan of the large houses in front. The existence of such shadowy regions, indoors or out – designed for the use of menials and for the removal of ordure – encouraged the notion of a domestic zone set apart for the unsightly and the unsavoury.

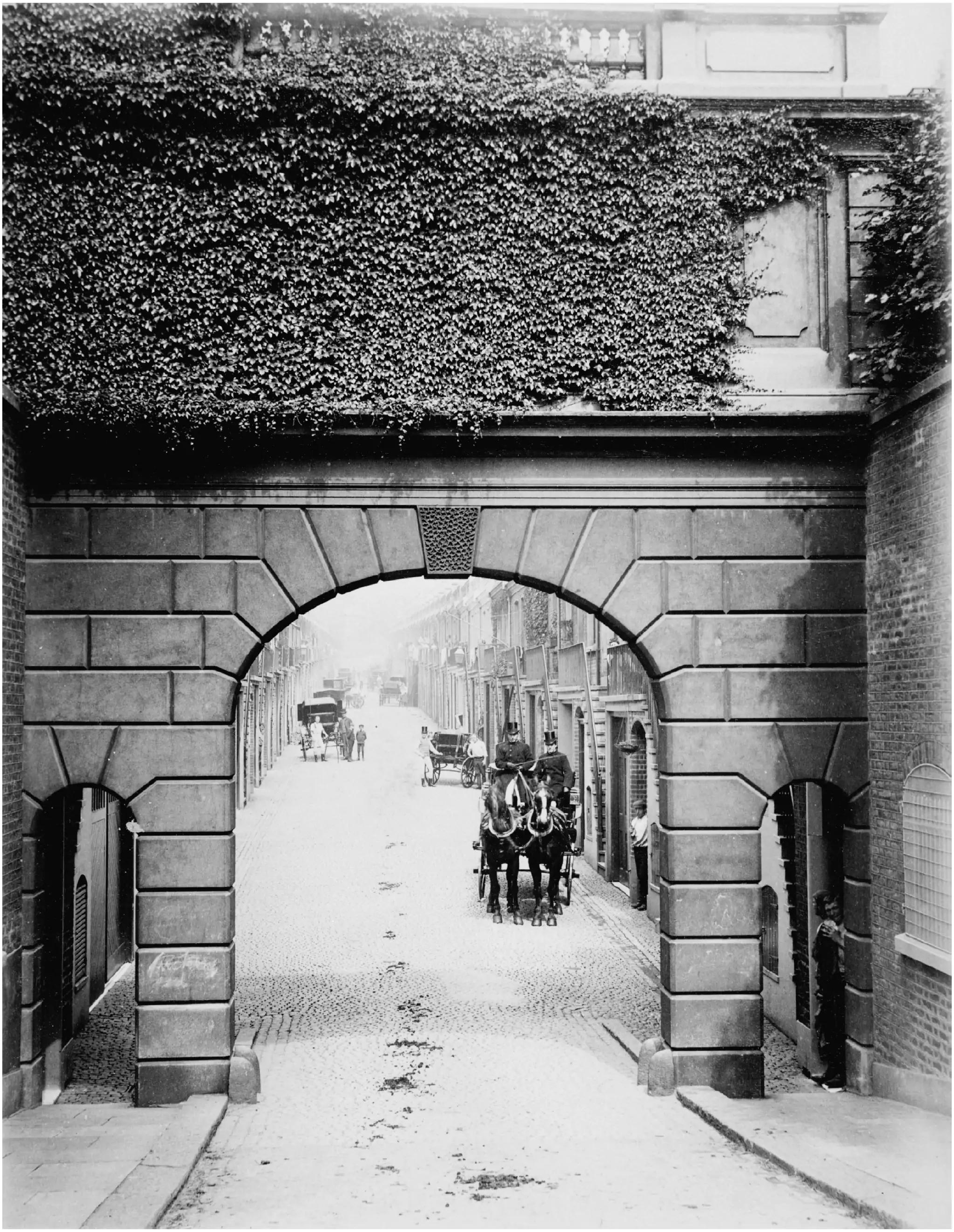
In the mid 20th century, the picturesque mews was frequently spiced with scandalous and newsworthy goings-on. The innocent-looking cottages of Wimpole Mews and Bryanston Mews West provided unlikely settings for the Profumo affair in the early 1960s – the former was the home of society osteopath Stephen Ward, and the location for the assignations of the government minister John Profumo with the showgirl Christine Keeler. Central London mews have never quite escaped the colourful associations with sleaze and scandal. Just a few years later, Michelangelo Antonioni roughed up a Notting Hill mews called Pottery Lane, reallocating it to Charlton, far away across the Thames, and made it the setting for the disturbing key scene in his film *Blow-Up* (1966).

It would have been hard in the 1960s to imagine an estate agent specialising solely in mews properties for sale or rent. Sharp-eyed architects, however, were alive to the possibilities offered by gap-toothed mews. Semi-industrialised areas such as north Camden offered sites which were, essentially, free from onerous planning requirements. In these spots, brave new architecture flourished. The adventurous individuals responsible tended to be young self-builders and their houses could be, and often were, calling cards for an entire architectural practice.

Some of these houses are included in *At Home in London: The Mews House*, a new book surveying 16 projects from the 1960s to the present day. The work of John Winter (1960s) and David Wild (1980s) pointed in one direction, reliant on modernist forms and materials, while that of Ted Cullinan, another. The Japanese-style cottage built in 1965 by Cullinan and his wife at 62 Camden Mews, described here as 'gypsy caravan-like', was self-evidently expressive. The book's author, Ellis Woodman, notes that new-build mews houses 'enjoyed an expressive licence that Britain's conservative planning culture rarely extended to new homes on more conspicuous sites'. London's back lanes incubated much of the best new domestic architecture in the city and still do, under the radar. The mews house (or site) is an opportunity, suggesting a housing type for everyone, almost anywhere. Look at Edgewood Mews in Finchley, north London, by Peter Barber Architects. Completed in 2022, the front of this mixed-tenure housing scheme faces a main road – so, properly enough, it is the rear that plays with the idea of a mews, happily offering both privacy and access. The wheel that started turning behind Grosvenor Square has turned full circle.

At Home in London: The Mews House, *by Ellis Woodman, is published this month by MACK.*

Gillian Darley is an architectural historian and the author of John Soane: An Accidental Romantic *(Yale University Press).*



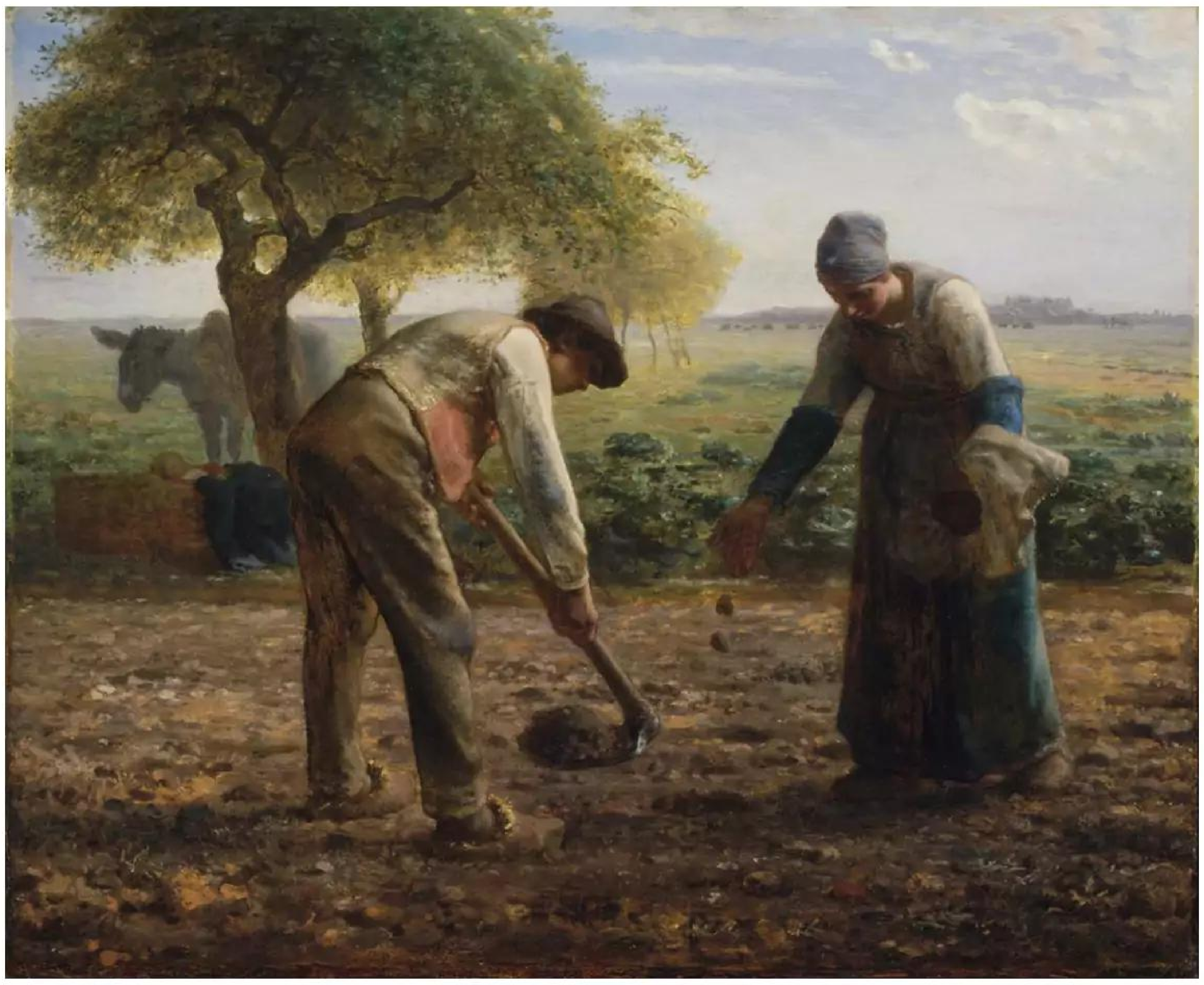
Holland Park Mews in west London, photographed in the early 20th century, was built in 1860–79 for stabling

Photo: English Heritage/Heritage Images/Getty Images

FOOD

Starch reality

The potato has long been a source of inspiration for artists depicting the peasant classes, writes **JENNY LINFORD**



Potato Planters, c. 1861, Jean-François Millet (1814–75), oil on canvas, 82.5 × 101.3cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Unassuming in appearance and mild in flavour, the potato is taken for granted as a humble, everyday foodstuff. In fact, this modest-looking tuber has a remarkable history. Its origins are in South America, where it was a staple food for Andean communities. The potato was introduced from Latin America to Europe as part of the 'Columbian Exchange' – the transfer of plants – including tomatoes, maize and chillies – as well as animals and diseases, that followed Christopher Columbus's voyage to the Americas in 1492. Today, the potato is the world's fourth most cultivated food crop, after the three great grains, rice, wheat and maize.

Hardy, easy to grow and a good source of energy, the potato plant was cultivated by rural communities throughout Europe. European statesmen and rulers, seeking to ensure a well-nourished population, extolled the potato's virtues as a useful crop. In Ireland, where the rural poor had to scrape a living on small plots of land, the productive and calorific potato plant was widely adopted as a staple. Writing of the state of Irish peasants in 1727, Jonathan Swift observed that they 'pay great rents, living in filth and nastiness upon buttermilk and potatoes and not a shoe or stocking to their feet'.

With the arrival of potato blight in Europe during the 1840s, the Irish dependence upon one subsistence crop had dire consequences. With no other staple food, the repeated failure of the potato crop in Ireland, compounded by the intransigence of the British government, resulted in the Great Famine (1845–52), which caused an estimated million deaths from starvation, alongside mass emigration. This shocking event resonates powerfully in Irish culture to this day. In his poem 'At a Potato Digging' (1966), Seamus Heaney describes a potato harvest, contrasting it viscerally with the horror of the Great Famine, in which 'putrefied potatoes' lay in the ground alongside rotting bodies. In other poems, Heaney wrote affectionately of watching his father digging for potatoes – evoking the 'cool hardness' of freshly dug new potatoes – and of companionably peeling them with his mother as a boy.

Given that potatoes grow underground, there is, aptly, an earthy quality to how potatoes are depicted in art. The development of blight-resistant potato varieties allowed it to be widely grown as an important food crop in Europe during the 19th century. A founder of the Barbizon School, the artist Jean-François Millet often portrayed the hard manual labour carried out by workers on the land. Millet's painting *Potato Planters* (1861) depicts a man and woman planting potatoes – a crop with which they will feed themselves – and imbues both figures with a fundamental dignity. In Émile Zola's novel *Germinal* (1885), about a mining community that goes on strike, potatoes are a vital food for the miners. Vincent Van Gogh was an admirer of Zola's work and in 1885 he painted his only group portrait, *The Potato Eaters* (on view at Het Noordbrabants Museum as part of 'De Aardappel', which runs from 11 October–1 February 2026). Writing to his brother Theo, Vincent described his intent for the picture: 'You see, I really have wanted to make it so that people get the idea that these folk, who are eating their potatoes by the light of their little lamp, have tilled the earth themselves with these hands they are putting in the dish, and so it speaks of manual labour and – that they have thus honestly earned their food.'

From a culinary point of view, the potato is remarkably versatile, surely one reason for its wide popularity. There are thousands of varieties but, depending on their starch content, potatoes are broadly classified as floury or waxy and are used accordingly. They can be cooked in numerous ways: baked, roasted, mashed, fried, boiled, braised, stewed, or steamed. It is, however, in its deep-fried incarnation as chips, frites or French fries that the potato is surely best loved. Although these irresistible deep-fried treats are now devoured around the world, when and where the chip was first created is much disputed, with both France and Belgium laying claim to the honour in the 17th, 18th or 19th century, depending on which origin story you choose.

The chip, of course, plays a key role in several national dishes: France's *steak frites*, Britain's fish and chips, America's burger and fries. Much kitchen geekery has gone into obsessively exploring how to make the 'perfect' chip, with Heston Blumenthal creating the 'triple-cooked chip'. McDonald's best-selling item is its 'World Famous Fries®', featured on its menu since 1955. It's estimated that McDonald's sells more than 4,000 tonnes of its fries around the globe every day. The humble potato – the globe-trotting vegetable that became a staple food of the rural poor – is now big business.

Jenny Linford is the author of Repast: The Story of Food *(Thames & Hudson).*

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Little terroir

The wine and art on offer at Château La Mission Haut-Brion help this diminutive vineyard punch above its weight, writes **CHRISTINA MAKRIS**

Château La Mission Haut-Brion in Bordeaux

Courtesy Château La Mission Haut-Brion

Venturing south-west out of the centre of Bordeaux towards the quiet suburb of Talence, one can easily miss the 20 hectares that make up the exquisite Château La Mission Haut-Brion, with its walled rose gardens, calm ponds and manicured lawns. It is not just the chateau's diminutive size that makes it inconspicuous: its neighbour, Château Haut-Brion, rated *Premier Grand Cru Classé*, has historically attracted more attention, even if the plots are separated only by a regional road. The classic Bordelais composition of its parcels (48 per cent Cabernet Sauvignon, 45 per cent Merlot, 7 per cent Cabernet Franc) benefits from the same gravelly soil – hallmark of the Graves appellation. In certain vintages La Mission has rivalled its First Growth neighbour in demand. Prince Robert of Luxembourg, president of Domaine Clarence Dillon, which owns both estates today, says that La Mission Haut-Brion has always been considered the unofficial sixth member of the First Growth classification – a group of five of the finest estates in Bordeaux.

The estates were originally connected through matrimony: in 1540, Marie, the only sister of Jean de Pontac, who constructed the Haut-Brion chateau in 1533, married a Bordelais merchant, Arnaud de Lestonnac, proprietor of the adjacent plot. Arnaud's granddaughter, Olive de Lestonnac, now recognised as a pioneer in improving viticulture and winemaking methods in her time, bequeathed the estate to the Lazarist Order of Bordeaux, also known as the Priests of La Mission; they built the chapel of Notre-Dame d'Aubrion on the estate in 1698.

In 1935 Haut-Brion was bought by a Texan businessman, Clarence Dillon. Clarence's son, the former US Treasury Secretary (1961–65) and art collector C. Douglas Dillon, served as chairman and president of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the 1970s and '80s. His grandson, Prince Robert, continues the family tradition of collecting art and viticultural artefacts and has maintained the 'technique my great-grandfather mastered'. His role is to be 'a warden of this viticultural history'.

The estate of La Mission Haut-Brion bears traces of its monastic past. The grounds surround cloistered passages and the chapel with its stained-glass images bearing scenes of the Virgin Mary's life. In 2007, Dillon built a new cellar – using the same stone, from the nearby Frontenac quarries, as Bordeaux's most important monuments in the 18th century – as a 'modern cathedral to wine'.

The intimacy of La Mission Haut-Brion is most keenly felt in its tasting room. Oak-panelled and with its beams, windows and furniture carved by Italian woodworkers, the room suggests that drinking wine is as much an aesthetic experience as a contemplative one and, like ageing in an oak barrel, requires time. Robert says that wine 'bridges the senses, just like art, in its bid to reach a sense of the sublime. This is something other than just being "good".' Rather, it is 'a state that takes your breath away, allows a pause and a moment for thought to be absent, to be moved by what you have just experienced'.

Here, visitors will be surrounded by a series of engravings by Albrecht Dürer from the family collection while they taste the wine. Prince Robert wanted to continue the 'theme linked to the ecclesiastical history of the place'. There are etchings from the artist's series *The Apocalypse*, *The Little Passion* and *The Life of the Virgin*. There is also an exceptionally rare *Man of Sorrows with Hands Bound* from 1512, painted over in watercolour and highlighted with gold.

The full set of 37 woodcuts in *The Little Passion* of 1511 runs from the Fall of Man to the Last Judgement. In this setting, it's easy to see an affinity with the travails and mastery of fine winemaking. Seen in this setting, the works impress less as relics of German Renaissance piety and more as meditations on devotion and endurance – themes mirrored in wine, which demands patience to reveal its potential and depth.

If Haut-Brion represents Bordeaux's extroverted prestige, La Mission Haut-Brion offers something quieter: an estate where history, art and devotion converge. From the Lazarist priests who planted vines in the 17th century to the Dillon family who continue their stewardship today, the property's legacy is one of reflection as much as refinement. To drink these wines is not only to savour Bordeaux at its best but to enter into a dialogue with centuries of art, faith and patient craftsmanship.

Christina Makris's Art in Vineyards: Cultivating Culture *will be published by Skira this autumn.*

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A perfect fit

MILENA LAZAZZERA on an intriguing fusion of contemporary jewellery and rococo porcelain

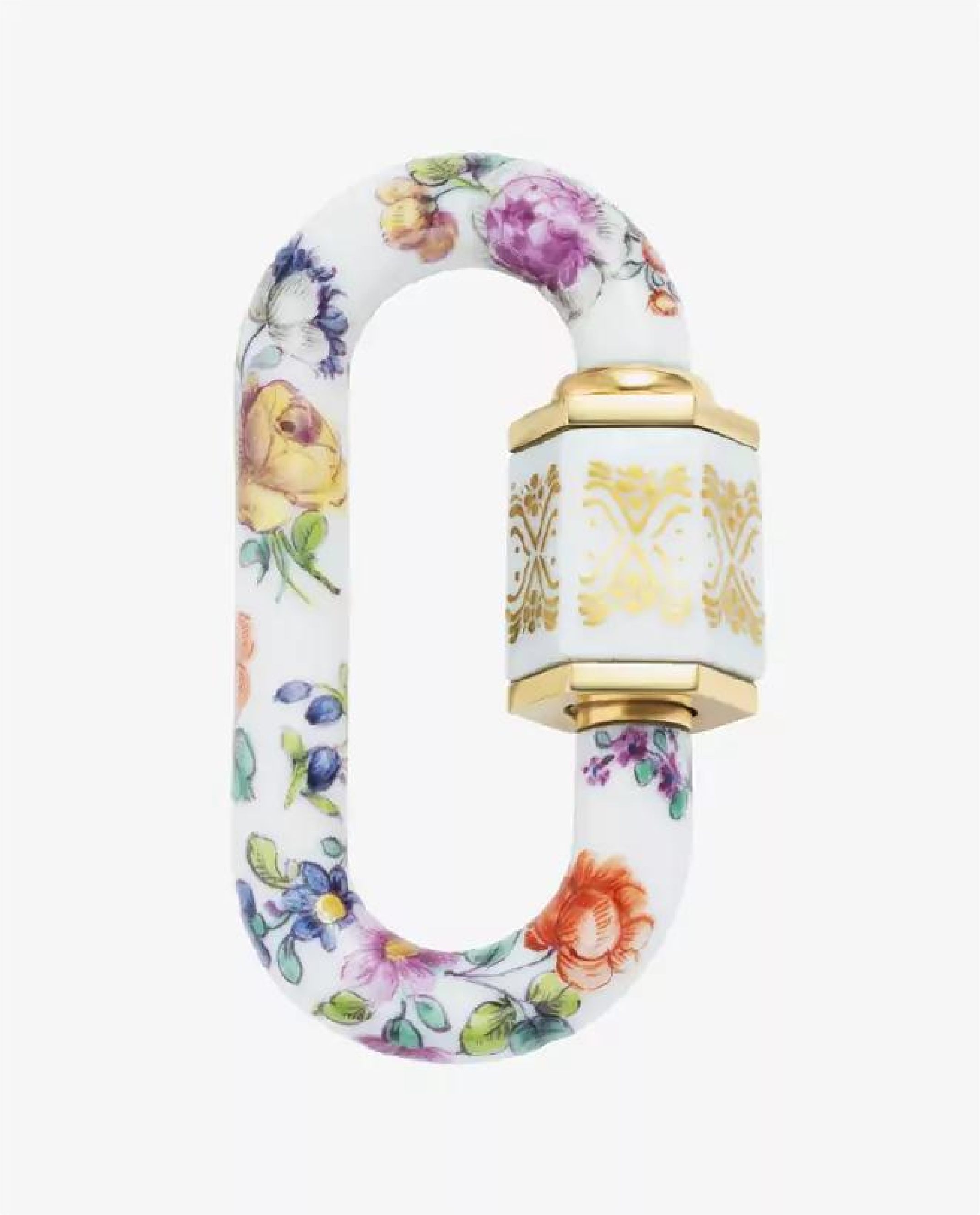
Marla Aaron has a knack for stopping people in their tracks. She made her debut in the jewellery world in 2012 with an oversized, utilitarian carabiner, or 'lock', that became the cornerstone of a new concept: modular jewellery. The piece can be worn as a pendant necklace, linked into a chain or coiled around the wrist. She expanded on the idea with a novel hinged ring that could also integrate chains and bracelets. Her tagline of 'hard-working jewellery' is fitting.

In 2016 Aaron installed a jewellery vending machine at the Brooklyn Museum; a second followed in a hotel garden in Brooklyn and a third at the Rockefeller Center. In 2022 she took the concept to new heights with a gumball machine dispensing jewels at Bergdorf Goodman. And yet, even for a designer known for eccentricity, her latest move caught everyone off guard: a collaboration with Porzellan Manufaktur Nymphenburg, the 278-year-old purveyor of fine porcelain to the Bavarian royal court.

'I had been circling this idea for years,' Aaron says. 'I first met someone from Nymphenburg when I was still a marketing executive – before I had even launched the jewellery. Hearing him talk about the history of the company and the way Nymphenburg works, it stayed with me.'

Her fascination grew so strong that in 2017 – five years after starting her eponymous brand – she invited Anders Thomas, Nymphenburg CEO, and Ingrid Harding, head of product development, to her studio 'with some very vague notions of what we could do together'. More brainstorming followed until, in 2022, Aaron finally visited the baroque Nymphenburg Palace in Munich, where the manufactury is housed.

'I couldn't get it out of my mind,' she says. 'When I visited, I watched the artisans work, toured the archives and was even served lunch. The food was offered on such exquisite porcelain that I offered to do the dishes just for the pleasure of holding them. That's when it struck me: the porcelain could be an "object", but it could also be jewellery.'



Marla Aaron is known for her 'lock' jewellery, which she has adapted here in collaboration with Porzellan Manufaktur Nymphenburg

From there, the idea was very simple: to celebrate the artistry of Nymphenburg through Aaron's functional, mechanism-driven designs, bringing this rare and endangered craft to a broader audience. Putting it into practice, however, was anything but.

Aaron had her heart set on working with the Cumberland pattern – a lavish rococo floral motif featuring bouquets, butterflies and insects, all edged with fine 18-carat gold. The motif was designed in the 1760s by Joseph Zächenberger for the Earl of Cumberland and it remains one of the most intricate hand-painted decorations still produced today. Only artisans with a decade or more of experience are allowed to paint it.

'Jewellery is not our area of expertise, and we are usually hesitant about collaborations,' Harding says. 'But Marla's energy and enthusiasm captivated us so much that we were happy to do the development work with her and release our historic Cumberland decor.'

Nymphenburg has, in the past, worked with artists and designers such as Damien Hirst and Vivienne Westwood. However, adapting the Cumberland pattern for jewellery required selected expert artisans to scale it down and work with even greater precision, ensuring its character remained intact when miniaturised. Once painted, the tiny, fragile porcelain pieces were shipped to New York's Diamond District, where Aaron's team painstakingly assembled them into functional jewels – ones that could open, close and hold charms – while remaining intact and easy to handle.

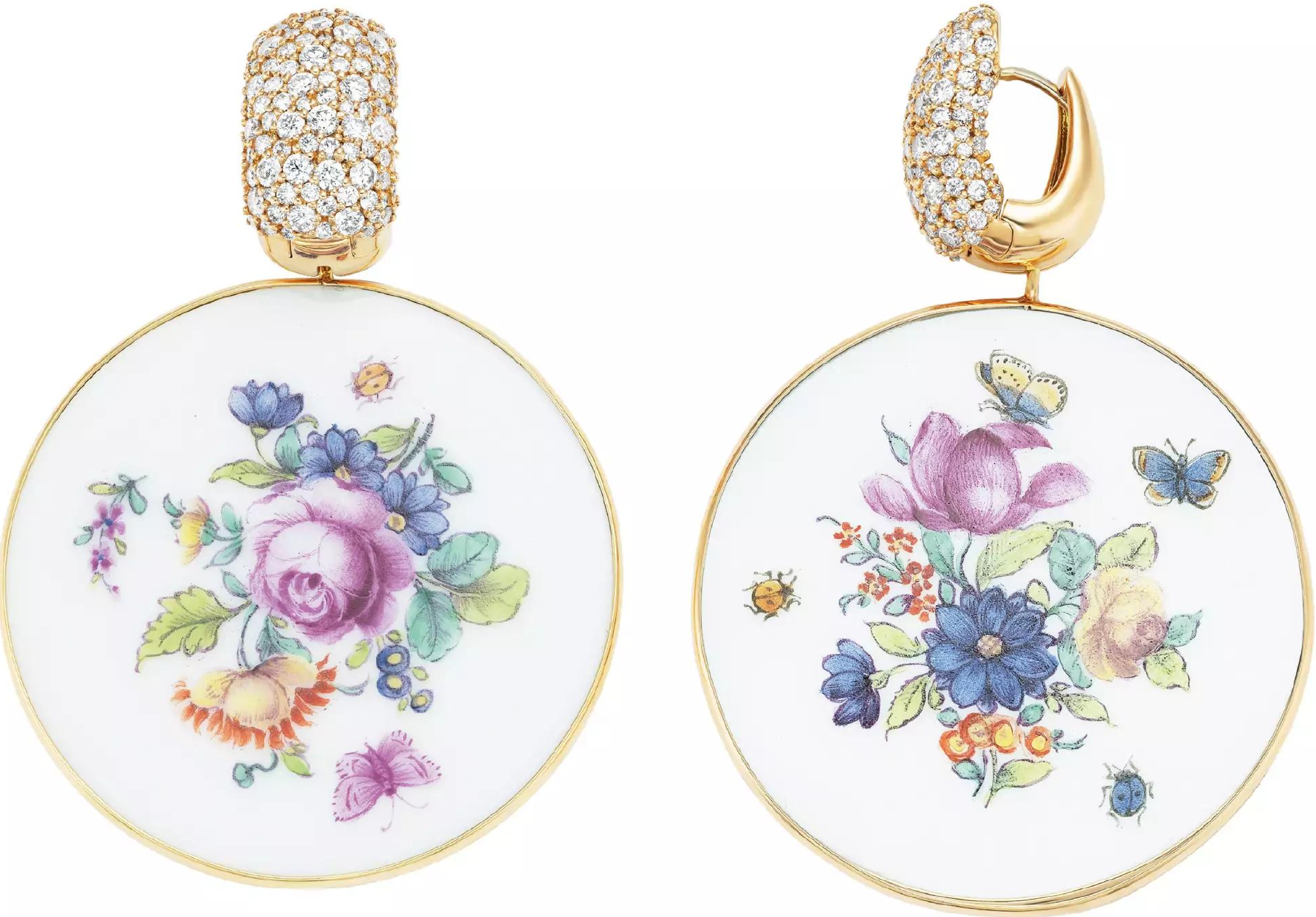
'I'm often told that my ideas are impossible, but porcelain added a whole new level of "crazy",' Aaron says. 'We tested, retested, started again, until it finally worked.'

One of the biggest engineering challenges was perfecting the threading of her signature lock so that it would open and close smoothly while holding the porcelain securely. Similarly, the earring discs had to be refined until they were light enough to wear but thick enough to display the hand-painted patterns clearly. 'Some pieces broke along the way – I kept trays of them in my office to tell the story of how we got here,' Aaron says.

The result is a capsule collection debuting in October. It includes Aaron's lock, now reimagined with Nymphenburg porcelain; a bracelet with a rolling cylinder clasp; a disc that can be worn as either an earring or a pendant; and what Aaron calls the 'depository': a small, vase-like stand about 15cm tall with an 8cm base, meant to hold rings, coins or even a single flower. The form was inspired by a desk accessory Aaron inherited from her grandfather. Prices start at $800 for an unpainted porcelain depository and climb to $16,000 for the fully decorated, oversized lock.

'Our jewellery has always been about function and play – mechanisms, things that open, close and transform,' Aaron says. 'When I saw Nymphenburg's rococo Cumberland pattern, I knew immediately: the juxtaposition of that delicate, centuries-old artistry with our functional jewellery would be startlingly beautiful – if we could pull it off.'

Milena Lazazzera is a journalist and consultant specialising in luxury goods.



Both photos: courtesy Maria Aaron

A pair of porcelain earrings mounted in 18-carat gold show off the Cumberland pattern, designed by Joseph Zächenberger in the 1760s

Helga Vockenhuber at the Pantheon: *Corona Gloriae*

The Pantheon in Rome, one of the great wonders of antiquity, was the setting for a remarkable exhibition earlier this summer. Austrian sculptor Helga Vockenhuber became the first woman ever granted the honour of presenting a sculptural installation in this unique space. Her work *Corona Gloriae*, which was on view from 2 July to 16 September, drew more than a million visitors – a number that underlines the extraordinary magnetism of the project.

At the centre of the installation stand seven hand-modelled fragments of a crown of thorns, cast in bronze and finished with a patina created specifically for the Pantheon called Antika Romana. The sculptures are arranged around a circular water basin that mirrors the proportions of the oculus of the dome, thereby embedding the work in the architecture around it. The still water becomes the source of a double reflection: it mirrors not only the bronze fragments but also the light of the oculus revolving above it. Images of heaviness and lightness, pain and hope, converge in the eye of the beholder.

'People are deeply moved, lingering at length before the sculptures and allowing both the installation and the space to resonate within them,' wrote art critic Friedhelm Mennekes, SJ, consultant for contemporary art at the Pontifical Council for Culture. In other words, *Corona Gloriae* transcends the purely visual and becomes a physical, spiritual experience.

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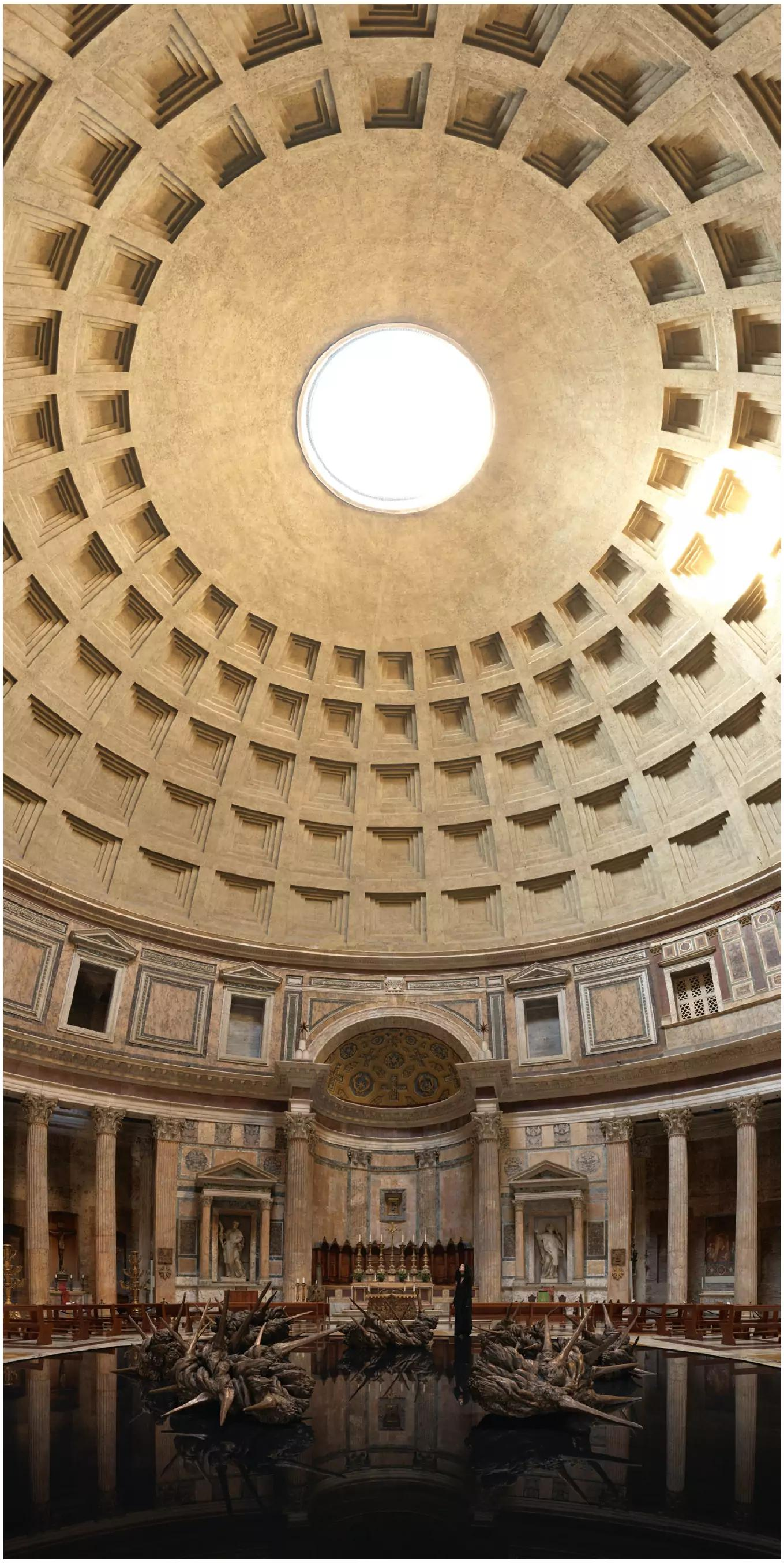
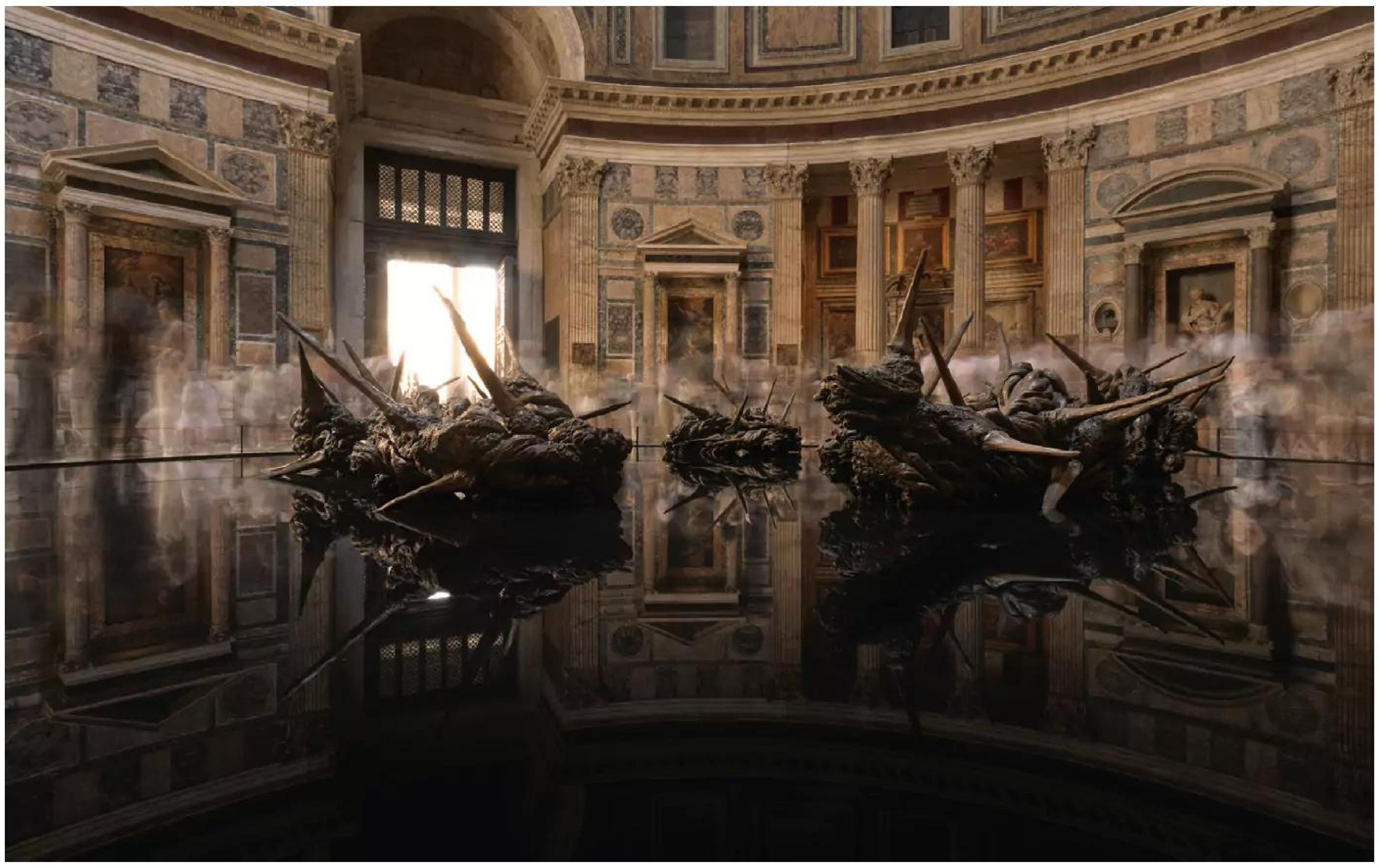
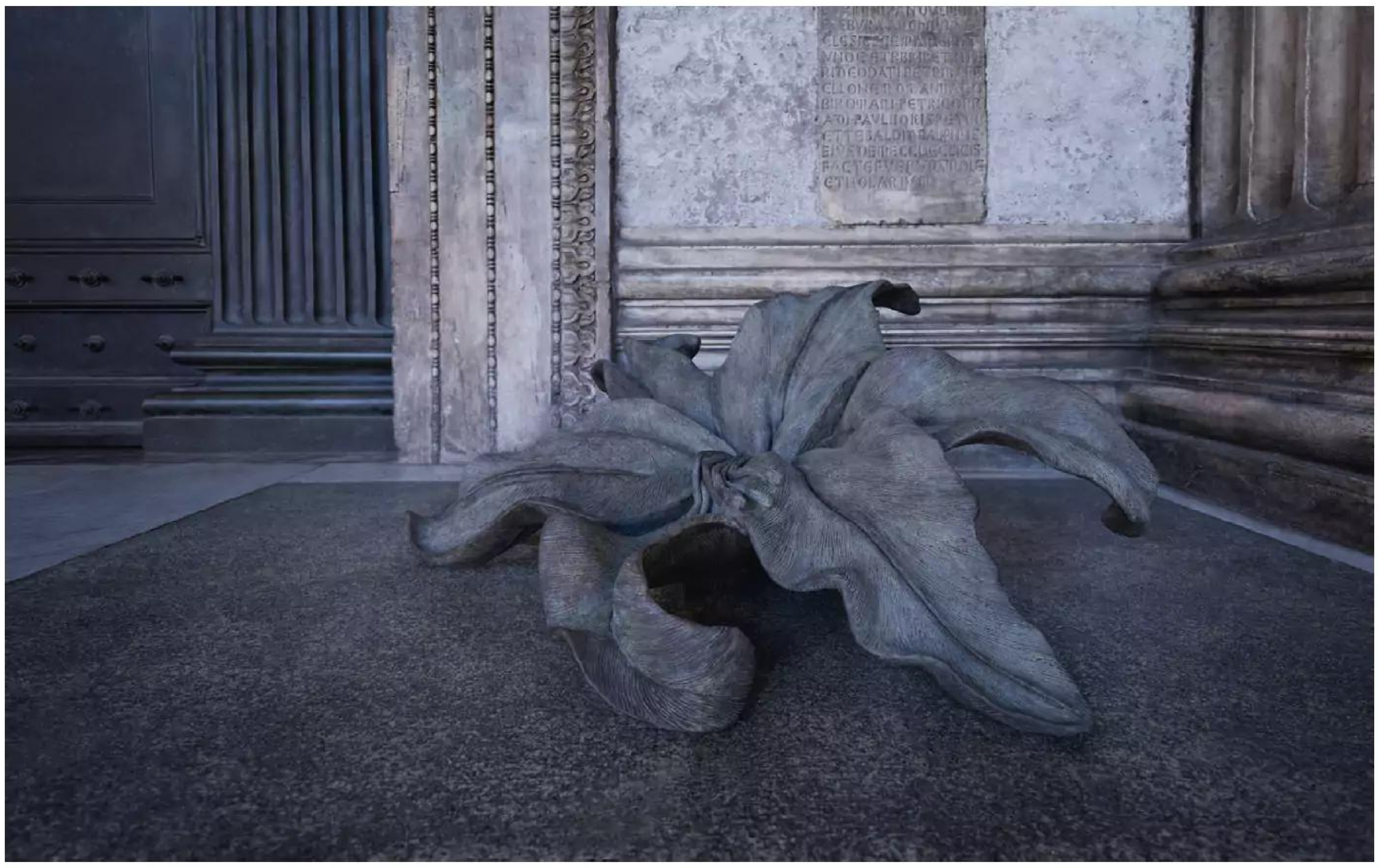


Photos: Ägidius Vockenhuber





Photos: Ägidius Vockenhuber

One of the curators, Prof. Giuseppe Cordoni, sees in the work an 'epiphany of the Christian space, where the memory of the Passion intertwines with the hope of renewal'. The other curator, Don Umberto Bordoni, says: 'These figures do not speak in a tone of pathos but in the language of silence. It is precisely through their restraint that they gain depth and open a space inviting the viewer to contemplation. They reveal that true greatness lies not in loud triumph but in the quiet power of fostering hope.'

Corona Gloriae also resonates with an earlier exhibition: in 2023, Helga Vockenhuber presented the installation *Belonging* in Palladio's Basilica San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice during the Architecture Biennale. There, the work dramatised the relationship between art and architecture. In Rome, Vockenhuber has built on this idea: the work is sustained by still water, the light of the oculus and the Pantheon's historic and spiritual gravity.

The project was made possible through the support of the Direzione Musei nazionali della città di Roma, the Austrian Embassy to the Holy See and the Dicastery for Evangelisation – Jubilee 2025.

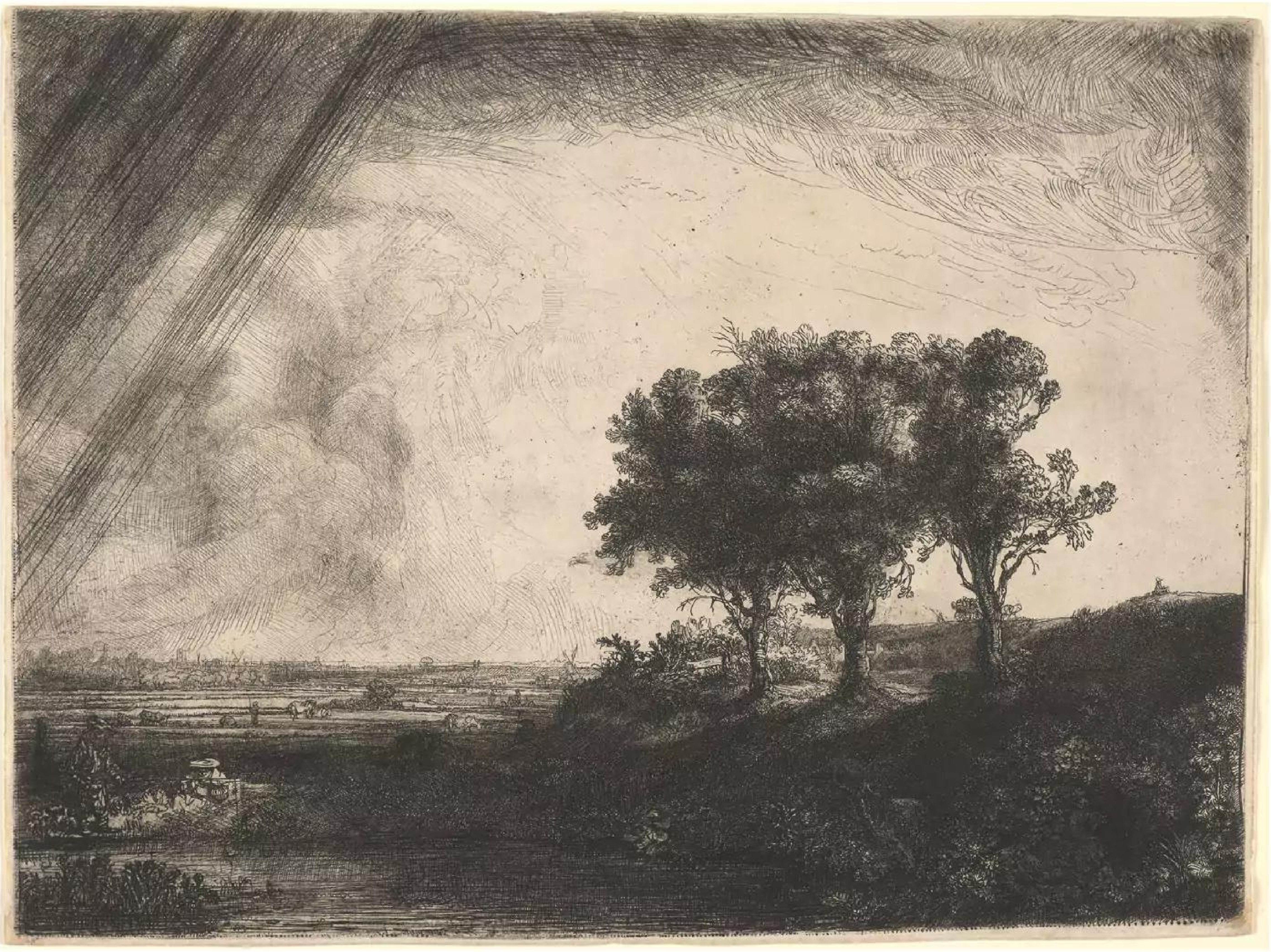
With *Corona Gloriae*, Helga Vockenhuber has demonstrated how contemporary sculpture can not only enter into dialogue with history, but also reinterpret it within a space that, like no other, embodies the tension between past and present.

The south-west facade of the new Princeton University Art Museum building, designed by Adjaye Associates in collaboration with Cooper Robertson

OUT OF THE BOX

A new home for the vast collection of Princeton University's art museum has divided critics. Will it win them over when it opens at the end of this month?

BY HELEN STOILAS



The Three Trees, 1643, Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–69), etching with drypoint and engraving, 21.3 × 28.5 cm. Princeton University Art Museum

When the Princeton University Art Museum reopens at the end of the month at the heart of a historic campus older than the United States, it will have been five years in the making and even longer in the planning. Its new home, a 13,500-square-metre modernist statement piece designed by Adjaye Associates, unites a collection that spans world cultures and time periods, defined by the interests of generations of alumni and an acquisitions budget beyond the dreams of most universities. Among its ambitious opening displays is a series of six contemporary art installations that have been commissioned or acquired for the building's inauguration by Nick Cave, Diana Al-Hadid, Jane Irish, Tuan Andrew Nguyen, Jun Kaneko and Rose B. Simpson.

In many ways the project is the culmination of nearly 275 years of collecting and a series of expansions over the centuries. The university received its first art donation, a portrait of colonial New Jersey's governor Jonathan Belcher, just before it moved to its current site in the town of Princeton in 1756. Donations from alumni have expanded its collection over the years: an especially large bequest came in 1944, comprising thousands of works amassed by the collector and archaeologist Dan Fellows Platt (class of 1895) and donated by his widow, the tennis champion Ethel Bliss Platt. This included antique Italian furniture, albums of drawings and barrels full of Renaissance paintings and antiquities. Strategic acquisitions have been enabled by an endowment established in the late 19th century by Allan Marquand (class of 1874), the university's first lecturer in art history and the museum's first director. Although the museum does not disclose the endowment's exact worth today, it can chase works when they come on to the market, even those that carry a six or seven-figure price tag, such as a rare impression of Rembrandt's etching *The Three Trees*, which the museum acquired in 2019; another example sold at auction for £869,400 in 2023.

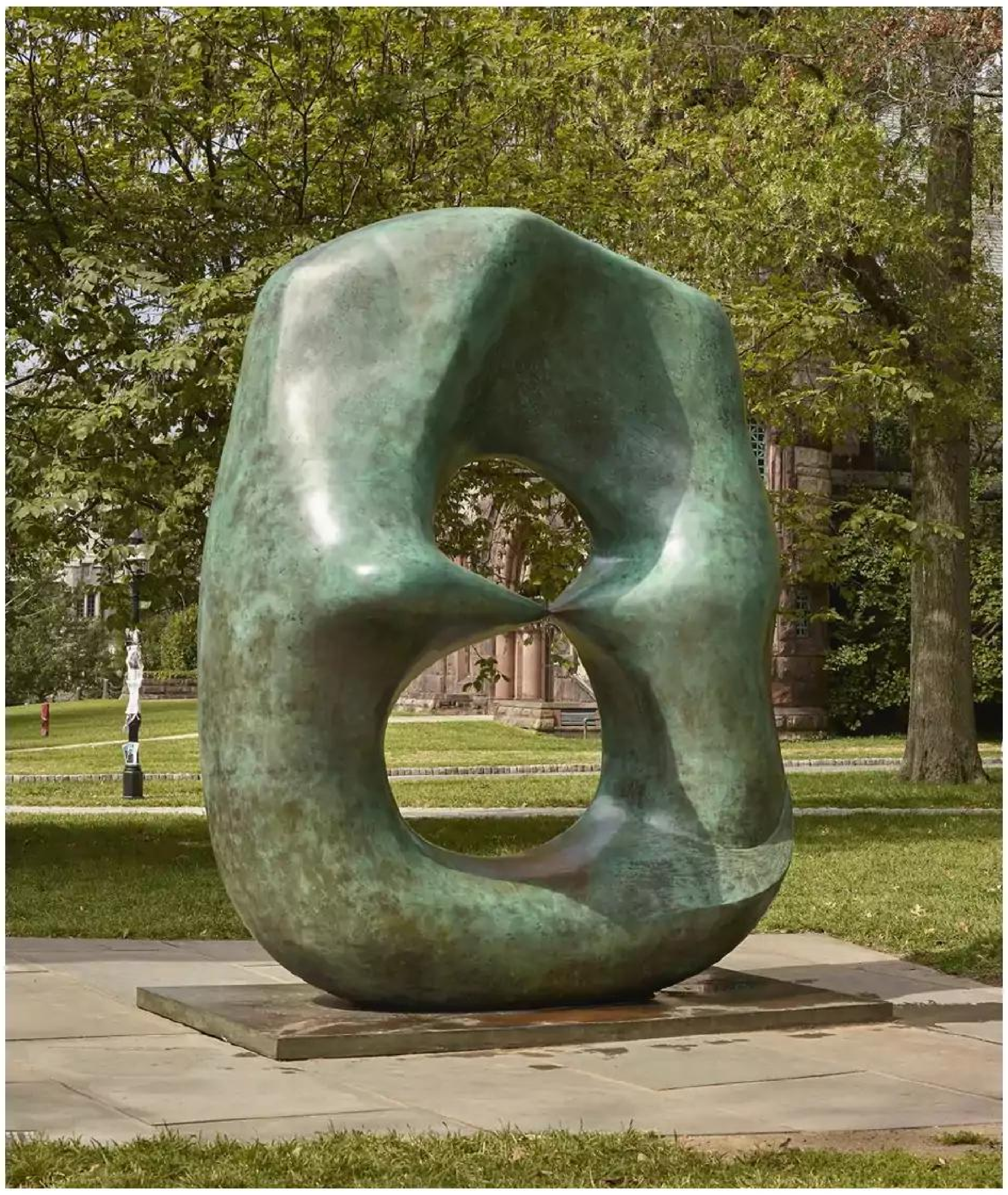
Today, Princeton's collection ranges across painting, antiquities, ceramics, prints and drawings, illuminated manuscripts and more. A particular highlight are the 22 sculptures by modernist masters including Alexander Calder, Henry Moore, Louise Nevelson, Isamu Noguchi and David Smith, installed across the campus. But finding a space to display the rest of its holdings properly has proved tricky.

The first concerted effort to build a museum was undertaken in 1882 – when Princeton decided to establish an art history department – and a new three-storey building, designed by A. Page Brown in Romanesque Revival style, was completed in 1890. Members of the public could visit the museum's collections by asking the janitor for a key. The first expansion was built in 1923, in a Venetian Gothic style, by campus architect Ralph Adams Cram, who was also responsible for the university's chapel and Graduate College, and another addition made in 1935. But most of the older structures were demolished to make way for a larger building in the International Style, designed by the New York firm of Steinmann and Cain and completed in 1966. Another extension was added in 1989, designed by the New York firm Mitchell Giurgola. The result was a museum that had been 'cobbled together over the years', its galleries 'awkwardly configured', leaving the institution

Previous spread and opposite page photos: Richard Barnes; courtesy Princeton University Art Museum

George Washington at the Battle of Princeton (1783–84), a portrait painted from life by Charles Willson Peale (1741–1827) hangs in the new American Art Galleries 'in dire need of more space', a university working group reported in 2016.

The new building, which takes up roughly the same footprint but provides double the space for displays and education, aims to solve those problems. But when David Adjaye unveiled his design in 2020, making clear that its nine hovering 'pavilions', cantilevered above pedestrian level, would not echo the campus's Gothic style, reactions from students and alumni were mixed. Controversy was stoked further when, in 2022, several of Adjaye's former employees alleged that the architect had sexually harassed them. (After Adjaye stepped back from a number of projects, final construction at Princeton was overseen by executive architect Cooper Robertson.) As the new building came together, with its aggregated stone curtain walls, mass timber and bronze panels, some alumni compared it to an Amazon warehouse or a monolith dropped on to campus by aliens.



Oval with Points, 1969–70, Henry Moore (1898–1986), bronze, 335 × 265.4 × 133.3 cm. Princeton University Art Museum

Photo: Jeff Evans; © Henry Moore Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

'I feel very strongly that this [campus] is a national resource,' says W. Barksdale Maynard (class of 1988), a lecturer in art and architectural history and author of a book on Princeton's history. 'This campus is so old, so historic, so little changed. People come here and they're charmed by it, because it is old-fashioned and it is quaint. I think when you insert these mega-structures into that context, you do great damage.' Maynard suggests that such a building might have been more fitting on the edge of campus, near the Lewis Center for the Arts and the university train station, or even on the other side of nearby Lake Carnegie, where the university has sports pitches.

As the opening nears, others have called for the Princeton community to give the building a chance. The artist and sculptor David Chamberlain (class of 1971) thinks that having an art museum at the centre of the campus matters for a university known for its liberal arts curriculum. 'To have the history of art and the completed, finished works sharing the same places and the same conversations and the same critical thinking process, I think that's really important academically,' he says. Once the shock of change has worn off, Chamberlain sees the new museum being recognised as a benefit for students and locals. 'I think for the first year, it's going to remain controversial, but it's going to grow on people very quickly. I bet five years from now, it'll become one of the favourite buildings on campus to work in, as well as to visit.'

Kayleen Gowers (class of 2025), the founder of the university's Architecture Club and now a designer at Studio Hillier, a local architecture and design firm, says that the new museum was a big topic of conversation among her classmates, along with other construction projects taking place across the campus. (The university has been on a building spree in recent years to accommodate a growing student population.) While the design was not an immediate favourite among students, she sees it as a bold choice that emphasises how much the university engages with the present. 'If Princeton only preserved its past, it would risk becoming a museum of itself,' Gowers says. She is keen to see the museum become a place where the university and the town can meet: 'That kind of overlap creates community.'

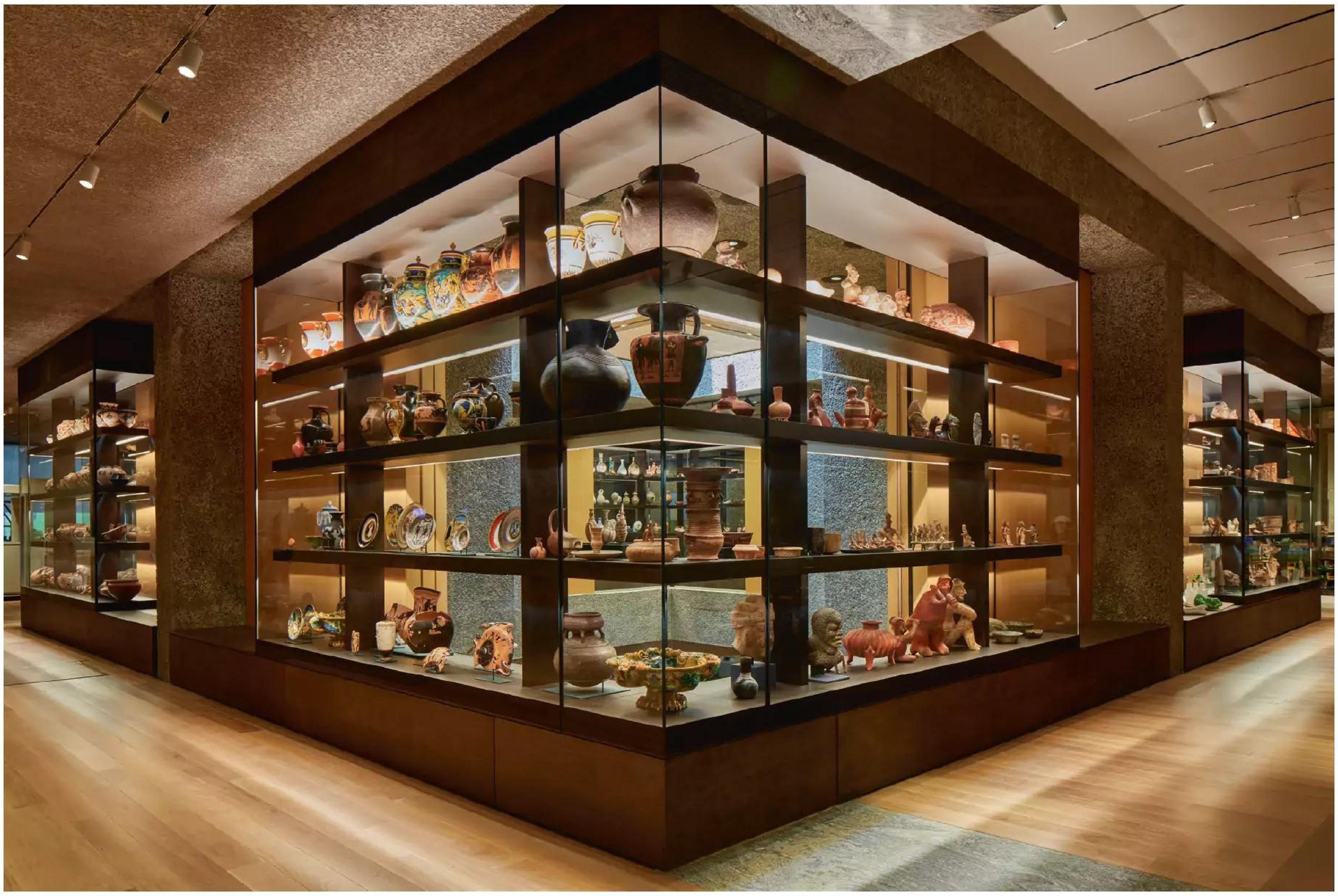
The desire to attract this dual audience was the reason to keep the site where it is, within a 10-minute walk of every undergraduate residence hall and close to the town's main thoroughfare on Nassau Street, according to James Steward, director of the museum since 2009. 'Symbolically, it's both incredibly important and rare that a university like Princeton, when it came time to make a better art museum building, would make the decision to do it right in the middle of the campus, a stone's throw from the historic centre, because the more commonplace decision would be to find some unbuilt edge location,' he says. 'Students would not, in fact, be able to stop in, in the two minutes they have between their residences and the dining hall.'

Ease of access also guides the layout of the museum, with entrances on all four sides – a rarity among new museum buildings, Steward says. The pedestrian arteries that students use to traverse the campus continue through the building in 'art walks' that intersect the structure, with works from the collection installed along these routes.

The northern entrance, for example, features a glittering, six-metre-tall wrap-around mosaic mural by the multimedia artist Nick Cave, in which one of his Soundsuited figures welcomes visitors with a bow. The dark wooden elements in the piece come from elm trees that were cut down to make way for the new museum. It is one of the six new commissions, continuing the tradition of public art on campus, and Cave's largest work of art to date.

Meanwhile, those that enter from the south walk over a stunning third-century mosaic pavement depicting a drinking contest between Heracles and Dionysus, one of a series of antiquities excavated from ancient Antioch, in modern-day Turkey, by Princeton archaeological teams in the 1930s. Several of these have been installed in the museum floors, underneath heavy protective glass, so visitors experience them in almost the same way their Roman owners would.

If liveable interiors are the true test of a building, then the new museum should pass with honours. The Grand



View of a display case in Princeton's renovated galleries

Photo: Richard Barnes; courtesy Princeton University Art Museum

Hall atrium, with concrete buttresses suspended impressively above visitors' heads, is full of comfy sofas and area rugs. But it also doubles as a classroom or event space, with bleachers that accommodate 265 people hidden inside one wall and a sunken stage and projection screen against the other. Glimpses of the museum's collection on the second floor, specifically art of the ancient Americas, can be seen from the display cases embedded in the upper walls. 'Once you enter the building, you experience the invitation to linger, to participate in a programme, to explore the galleries,' Steward says.

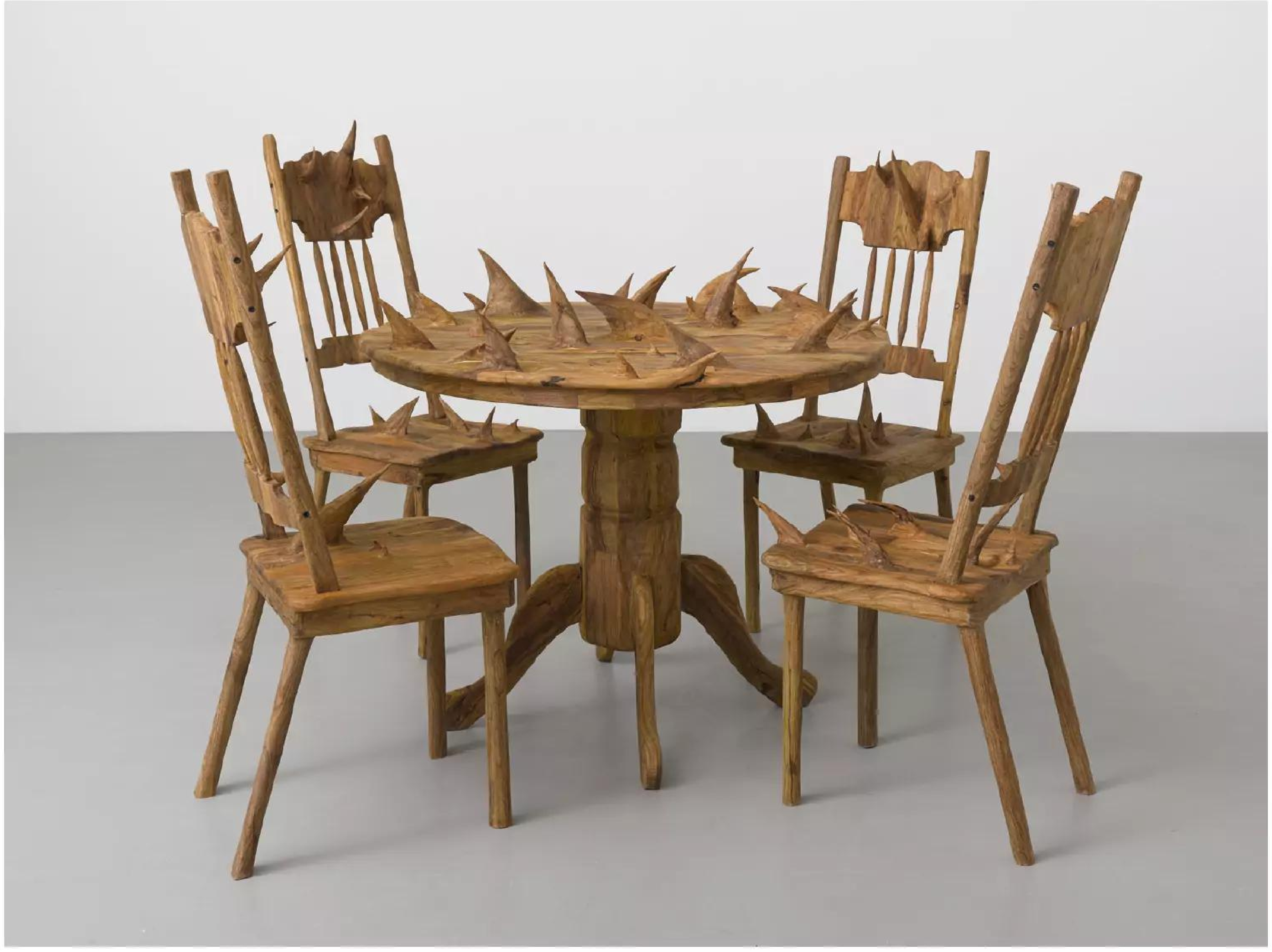
While most of the ground floor is taken up by study rooms, for instance, pieces of the collection can be found in all corners, including a wall of curated objects along a row of lockers and a 16th-century Mallorcan stone staircase hanging next to the actual stairs that lead to the collection galleries, restaurant and terrace on the floors above. These central public spaces, including a vitrine-filled 'orientation gallery' on the upper landing, will remain open for extended hours every day of the week. 'If we want everyone to truly think of this as their museum, we have to, in some part, meet them where they are and not expect them to adapt to us,' says Steward. Even the collection galleries will remain partially visible after hours through bronze chain-mail grilles, encouraging repeat visits.

The appeal to visitors to make their own discoveries continues throughout the galleries on the second floor, in which more of the 115,000-piece collection is on view than ever before, including some 'dense display' vitrines that serve as a middle ground between more selective curation and open storage. Because of the museum's generous acquisitions endowment, as well as more than 200 recent donations made during the construction process, many of the objects are on view for the first time. 'We're not a museum that regards its collections galleries as static or permanent,' Steward says. 'I have tried to ban the use of the word "permanent" because I think it creates a false understanding of what a collection is, especially in a college environment. You should understand the collection as this living, ever-evolving thing.'

Following this direction, the curatorial team has installed works more loosely across the galleries, sometimes grouping things chronologically, sometimes thematically, and allowing for artistic interventions. A thorny table and chair by Hugh Hayden sits next to colonial American furniture and paintings, for example. Elsewhere, a large black and orange Roberto Lugo vase, painted with urban street scenes, stands alongside ancient Mediterranean art. On the ground floor, a gallery opens with a presentation centred on the experimental ceramicist Toshiko Takaezu, who taught at Princeton for more than 30 years, which includes works by her teachers and students. It also places Takaezu's art in the context of abstract artists working at the same time, such as Helen Frankenthaler and Isamu Noguchi.

The diversity of the museum's collection and its egalitarian approach to works from different cultures and time periods is also due to its relatively secure position as a private, well-funded university. While the Trump administration is trying to dictate how American institutions interpret history and culture, targeting elite universities including Princeton, Harvard and Columbia, it has done this mostly by freezing access to federal grant money and

Display cases from the upper levels are embedded into the walls of the Grand Hall



America, 2018, Hugh Hayden (b. 1983), sculpted mesquite on plywood, 109.9 × 205.4 × 205.4cm. Princeton University Art Museum

raising taxes on the income these universities draw from their endowments. Unlike the leadership at other schools, which have sought conciliatory settlements with the White House, Princeton's president, Christopher L. Eisgruber, has asserted the university's independence.

The university itself has a healthy endowment of $34.1 billion (the fifth largest in the country) and 60 per cent of the museum's $30 million operating budget comes from endowment funds. Practically, this means that the museum's primary operations are somewhat sheltered, but it cannot rely on receiving federal funding, such as a National Endowment for the Arts grant, to support things like temporary exhibitions. 'It's a reminder that curation is a privilege, not a right, and can really be an incredible expression of freedom,' says Juliana Ochs Dweck, the museum's chief curator.

Steward says that the museum is actively thinking about how much of a risk it can take in the current environment, and in what form. 'I do think we can be very head-on about questions like, "How does art make us better citizens of the world, and therefore what are some of our responsibilities as a cultural institution in shaping dialogue?"' he says. 'My goal would be to do so in a way that allows as many people to come to the table as possible. In other words, I don't want to be so "partisan" that 40 per cent of the American public doesn't want to come through our doors because they don't think we're a place for them.'

Fans of ancient Roman sculpture, for instance, are as likely to find a worthwhile experience in the galleries as those interested in modern painting. 'The visitor has, in some sense, more autonomy and agency in this new building than they did in the old one,' Dweck says. 'They really need to make decisions as to what their pathway is, how they want to experience [the museum], what galleries they want to see, what style, what they want their pace to be.'

Open sight lines allow recognisable works, such as Charles Willson Peale's portrait of a victorious George Washington (1784) – the frame of which, according to legend, once held a portrait of George II 'decapitated' by a cannonball during the Revolutionary War – to serve as visual anchors. These direct visitors to different parts of the collection. There are nooks and niches throughout the building, some containing displays such as an ingeniously concave shelf of miniature objects in the Asian galleries, or a relaxing viewing room off the modern and contemporary art collection featuring a new commission by the Philadelphia-based artist Jane Irish installed in the ceiling. From almost every room, rectangular and circular windows frame views of the Princeton campus. In this way, the university's historic architecture and arboretum-like landscape become another part of the collection to admire and absorb.

'One of the things I hope will happen is that visitors will get what I'm terming "productively lost,"' Steward says, although he adds that since the floor plan is fundamentally circular, there is little risk of visitors getting disoriented. 'If you just keep going, eventually you'll make your way back to where you started. But maybe you'll discover some things along the way.'

Helen Stoilas is a freelance arts journalist and a former editor at the Art Newspaper.

Princeton University Art Museum reopens on 31 October. For more details, go to artmuseum.princeton.edu.

Opposite page photo: Richard Barnes; courtesy Princeton University Art Museum; this page photo: © Hugh Hayden

BROUGHT TO HEAL

Recently restored, the monumental religious paintings by Hogarth that adorn the north wing of St Bartholomew's Hospital in London show a more caring side of the satirical genius

BY KIRSTEN TAMBLING
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JASPER FRY

At the top of the staircase in the North Wing are *The Good Samaritan* (left) and *Christ at the Pool at Bethesda* (right), painted by William Hogarth in 1735–37

William Hogarth always had an eye for an opportunity. Fresh from the success of *A Rake's Progress* (1732–34), published in engraved form in 1735, he seemed poised to launch into his newly invented genre, the 'Modern Moral Subject'. But in nearby Smithfield, his local hospital was just emerging from scaffolding. Founded in the 12th century and strategically 'refounded' by Henry VIII, St Bartholomew's Hospital was just metres from the dark timber dwelling where Hogarth had been born; from 1729, it was being rebuilt to designs by James Gibbs. His local pride piqued and 'without', as he wrote later, 'having a stroke of this grand business before', Hogarth offered the governors a gift: he would cover the stairwell of the new administrative block with two monumental religious paintings: *Christ at the Pool of Bethesda* and *The Good Samaritan*. Few people in the 1730s were entirely convinced by Hogarth's essays in the grand manner to date, his painted output having been confined largely to conversation pieces and portraits – but once they heard the price, it was an offer the hospital authorities could hardly refuse.

It was ultimately a joint effort. The stairwell's less conspicuous decorative elements – rococo swags and grotesques and large baskets of fruit and flowers – as well as a set of monochromatic scenes from the life of the hospital's legendary founder, Rahere, were credited by contemporaries to one 'Mr Richards'. Hogarth's friend the landscape artist George Lambert (1700–65) provided the backgrounds. Between them, the three covered the whole stairwell, including the ceiling, to magnificent effect, creating an interplay of painting, decorative art and text that unfolds cumulatively, and sinuously, as the visitor works their way up and around the stairs to the hospital's dining room, concluding with Hogarth's characterful roundels of the ancient physicians Galen and Hippocrates. The whole installation has just been restored as part of a major renovation project across the Grade I listed North Wing of St Bartholomew's Hospital (still a working hospital, now generally known simply as 'Barts'). The site's caretakers, Barts Heritage, hope this will bring enhanced public access to two of Hogarth's lesser-known grand-scale projects, as well as offering new opportunities to engage with the hospital's 18th-century history.

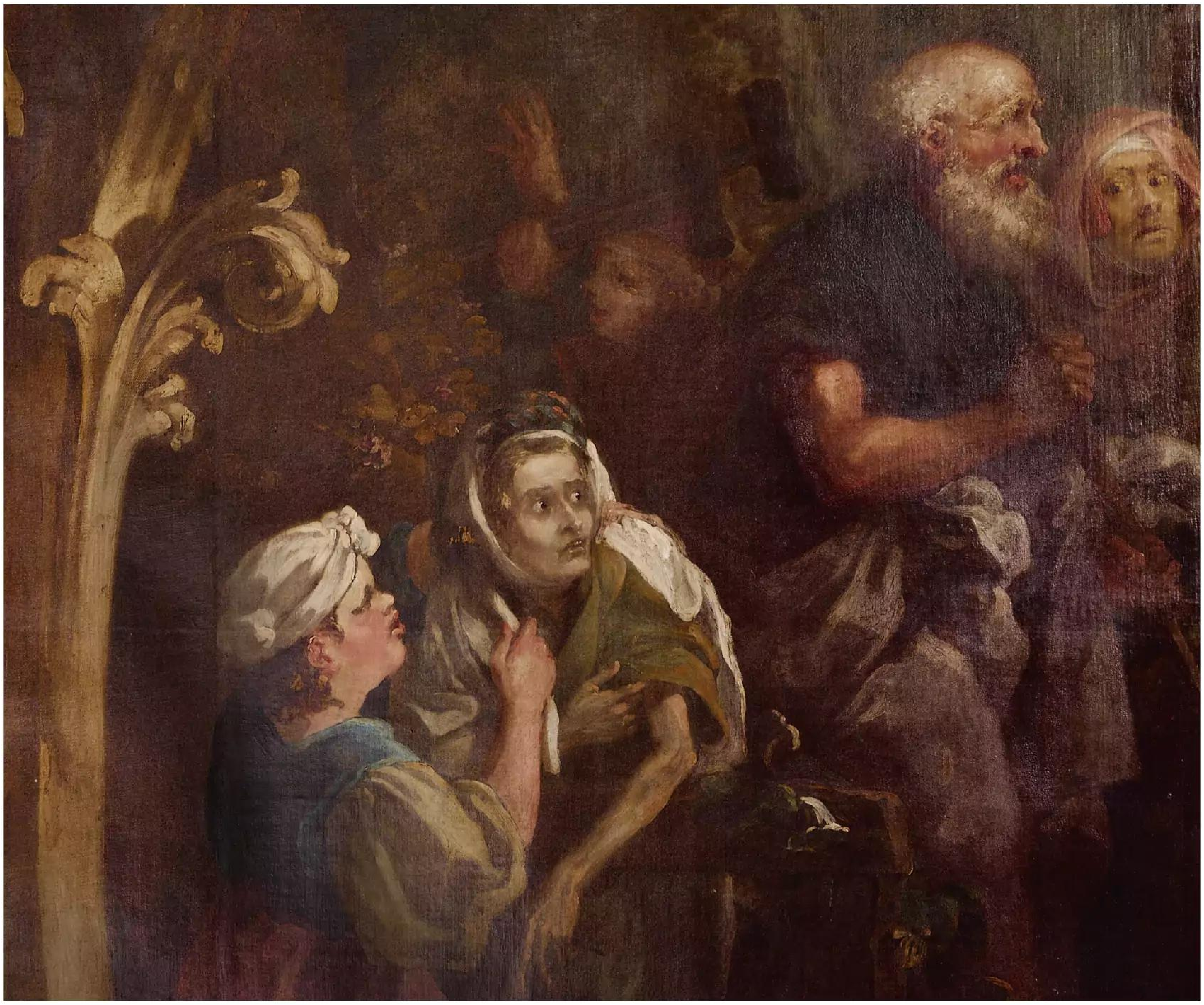
Many of London's public buildings were being built and rebuilt throughout this period, in the long aftermath of the Great Fire of 1666. Wall paintings were an important part of their visual rhetoric. Hogarth's pictures were addressed to the hospital's visitors, staff and potential benefactors, and though he used the visual language of the grand devotional scene, he also used this institutional context to explore a subject that had always interested him: the provision, or denial, of care. At the same time, unlike in *A Harlot's Progress* or *A Rake's Progress* (both of which feature caregiving prominently in their final scenes), for the Barts commission Hogarth placed this theme within a specifically Christian framework – 'caritas' being variously translated as charity, Christian love or benevolence – down to reproducing his source texts from the Gospels, to which his images remain doggedly faithful.

As described in John 5.2-8, the waters of the Pool of Bethesda, located below 'five porches', were periodically 'troubled' by an angel, rendering them therapeutic to the first person to step in them. Hogarth's characteristic social commentary pokes through his ambitions in his depiction of the sickly crowd who have gathered here to be healed. An irritable man with his arm in a sling is determined to keep his place in line. The woman next to him, apparently jaundice-stricken, side-eyes a blind man; another distractedly presses her hand to a worryingly inflamed breast, although now her head hurts too. A young mother clutching a miserable rickets-ridden child is trying to speak to the undistinguished underling managing proceedings, but he gestures her to one side, so that an imperious fellow in a fantastical turban can guide his naked paramour through the crowd on a litter. Restoration work has made it easier to spot the sores on her legs, presumably the result of venereal disease. At the top left, and finally free of the lot of them, a young boy turns his joyful face back one last time as he throws his newly useless crutches in the air, but this delirious

> Hogarth used the grand devotional scene to explore a theme that had always interested him: the provision, or denial, of care

The monumental figure of the man being tended to by the Good Samaritan encourages viewers to stop by, just as the biblical traveller does

A nude woman being carried to the pool at Bethesda bears the sores of venereal disease on her legs



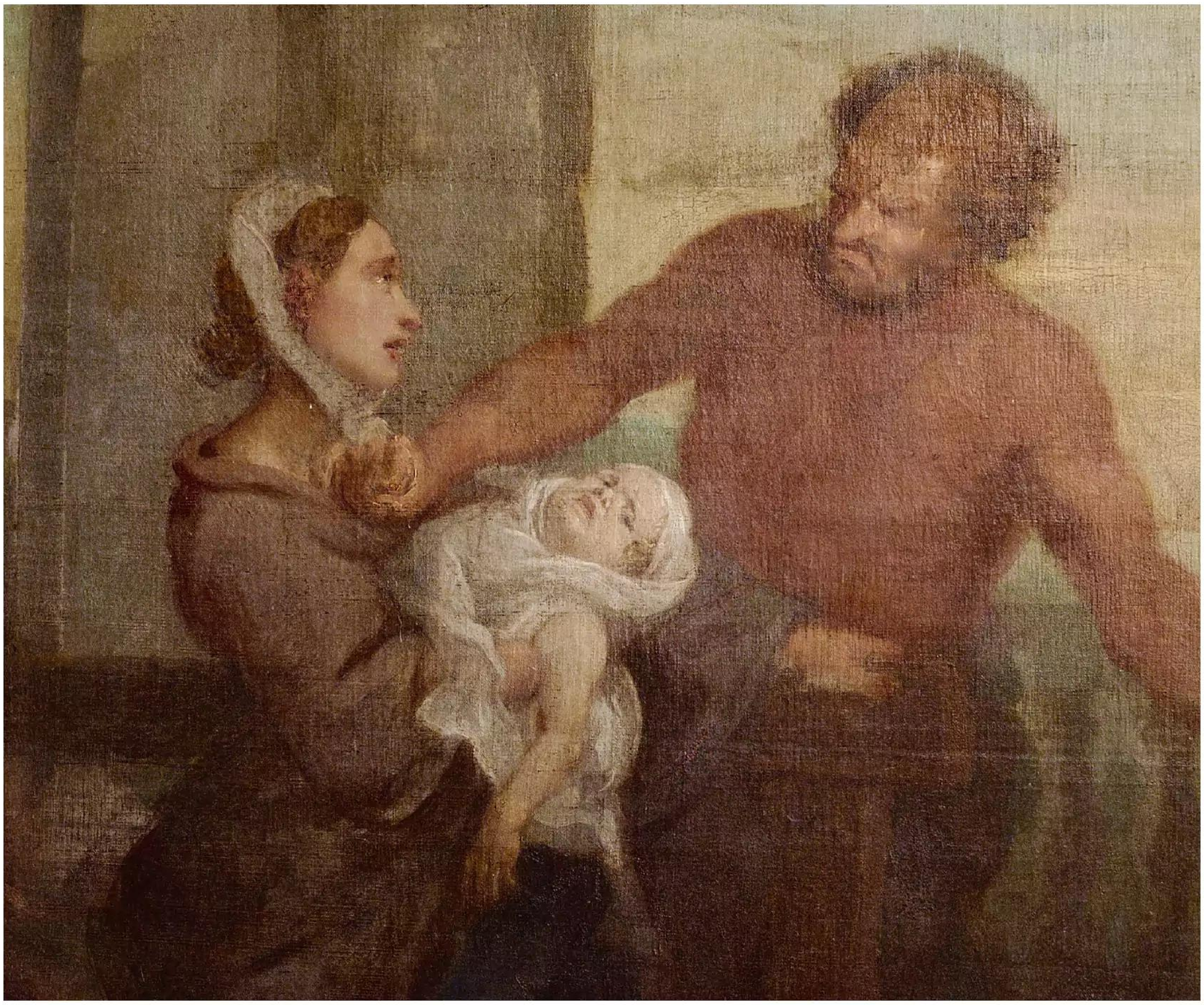
While a young boy turns back and throws his crutches in the air (top centre), two figures in the crowd wait in line for Christ to heal them

fantasy of complete physical recovery remains tantalisingly inaccessible, a glimmer in the gloom only visible if you stand at the top of the stairs and peer.

A visitor comes: Jesus, looming '7 feet high' (as Hogarth's fragmentary autobiographical notes proudly remind us), has light subtly radiating from his head as he stops to speak with an equally monumental recumbent figure who has had an 'Infirmity thirty & eight years' but, being unable to walk, has always languished at the water's edge. A moment later, the Saviour will command the invalid to 'take up thy bed and walk' – and he will. Yet Hogarth eschews that moment, rich though it is in visual drama. Instead, he shows Jesus asking, 'Wilt thou be made whole?', with the open mouth of the miraculous pool just visible in the space bridging his tenderly inquiring hand and the lame man in the central foreground. It is characteristic of Hogarth to focus on conversation over miracle-making. In this view, Christ is not just the physician doing his rounds; he is the man who stops. This is inevitably also a direct challenge to the viewer, who is, by definition, passing by – either on their way up or down the stairs. Will they answer? At the far right, a solitary figure with a skeletal head, emaciated arm, and grotesquely distended stomach looms from the shadows, an image of physical suffering – and a reminder of mortality – precisely positioned opposite the door to the hospital's dining room, ready to arrest satiated guests, warm with wine, as they make their way off and out into the night.

Who stops becomes the central motif in Hogarth's second painting, which is positioned to extend and reflect upon the focal painting of the Pool. This illustrates Christ's parable of the Good Samaritan. The proud priest who walked by the wounded Israelite stands aloof, at the top of the picture, many metres from the ground and framed against Lambert's luminous sky. But the eye is more immediately drawn to the monumental figure of the battered, naked man at the bottom, and then to the Samaritan gently dressing his wounds and wearing the same blue and red robes as the Christ on the adjacent wall (albeit dusty and less resplendent). This commission features four of these large-scale nudes: two male, one female, and the partially clad angel; all of them bigger than anything else Hogarth ever painted. Presumably they were the result of recent work in St Martin's Lane, where Hogarth had just co-founded what George Vertue – self-appointed historian of the 18th-century art scene – referred to as 'an Academy for drawing from the Life'.

At the same time, the idealised musculature of the two male figures contrasts with their physical vulnerability (just



A young mother holding a baby with rickets is kept at bay by a servant

as the desirability of the female figure, for the imagined male viewer, is undermined by evidence of venereal disease). This contrast was becoming familiar across London's hospital iconography. From 1676–1815, Caius Gabriel Cibber's larger-than-life nude personifications of *Raving Madness* and *Melancholy Madness* (1676) loomed over Moorfields at the public entrance to Bethlem Hospital, popularly known as Bedlam. *Melancholy Madness*'s Michelangeloesque physique flops uselessly as he gazes fixedly ahead at nothing in particular, while *Raving Madness* limply lifts his sculpted arms, howling impotently in his chains. Hogarth was certainly familiar with these; indeed, he is thought to have amalgamated them in the image of the semi-nude Tom Rakewell at Bedlam in the final scene of the *Rake*. However, walking to work through St Bartholomew's new Henry VIII Gate, Hogarth would also have passed the sculpted semi-draped personifications of 'Disease' and 'Lameness' sitting on a broken pediment above Gibbs's statue of the Tudor king. Smaller and more conventional than Cibber's figures, they cast their eyes heavenward, or (more practically) towards the apex of the hospital, which, like Jesus at Bethesda, offers to make them whole.

Hogarth seems to have been ultimately ambivalent about the Barts pictures. In his later notes, he describes them, using aptly medical terminology, merely as 'specimen[s]' to spur on Britain's native (and, as it proved, for the moment merely hypothetical) history painters. For all that, both pictures are full of confident, characterful painting and evocative 'Hogarthian' passages, such as the Samaritan's injured mastiff licking its wounds and the black-and-white spaniel leaning over (and out of) the illusionistic frame of the Pool as if searching for miraculous waters of its own. Yet it was a project, Hogarth wrote, 'from which I found no Effects and the reason upon consideration was so plain that I dropt all the old Ideas […] and pursued [modern life scenes]'. Hogarth leaves whatever he considers the 'plain' reason for their failure maddeningly unelaborated. But looking at his career in the round, it is still hard to regret his decision to abandon architectural painting – though this restoration restores his gumption to all its original glory.

Kirsten Tambling is curator of The Clockworks in London. Her book, Shakespearean Objects in the Royal Collection, *is published by Oxford University Press.*

Barts North Wing, which includes the Hogarth Stair and Great Hall, is open from 6 October. For more details, go to www.bartsnorthwing.org.uk.

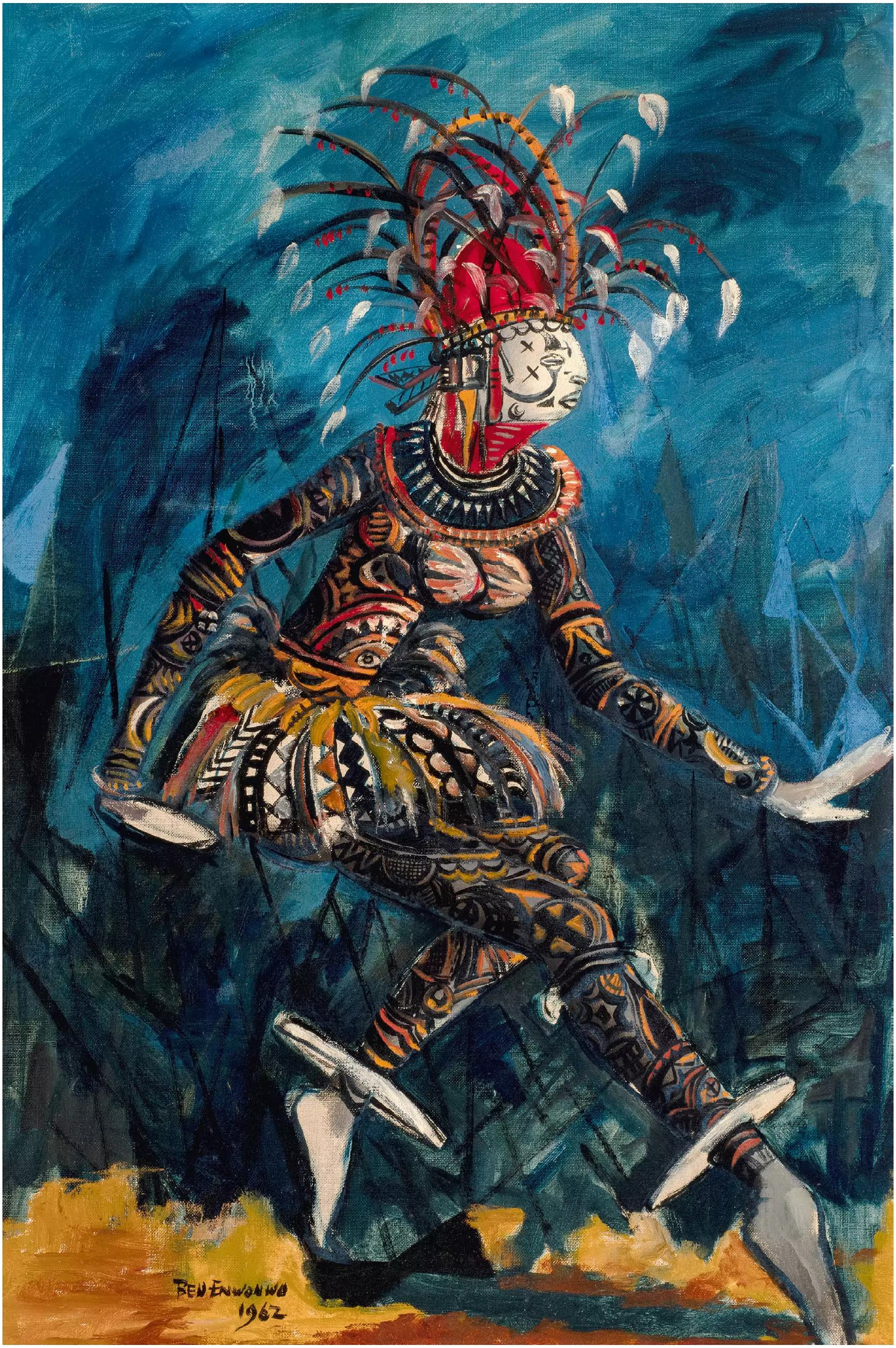
Opposite the hospital's dining room a skeletal figure with a death's head looms out of the shadows

OF
THE
AGE

The twists and turns in the career of the Nigerian sculptor and painter Ben Enwonwu mirror those of his native country as it left British colonialism behind

BY SAMUEL REILLY

Ben Enwonwu with his sculpture of Queen Elizabeth II in William Reid Dick's studio in London. In the background is Dick's statue of David Livingstone



The Dancer (Agbogho Mmuo – Maiden Spirit Mask), 1962, Ben Enwonwu (1917–94), oil on canvas, 92 × 62cm.
Ben Uri Gallery and Museum, London

Previous page photo: ZUMA Press via Alamy; this page photo: courtesy Ben Uri Gallery and Museum; © Ben Enwonwu Foundation

In 1956, Ben Enwonwu made the bold proposition to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Alan Lennox-Boyd, that he should be the first artist to produce a full-length sculptural portrait of Queen Elizabeth II. Scarcely a year later – after eight sittings in Buckingham Palace and a further four in the studio of the neoclassical artist Sir William Reid Dick – the young queen's six-foot-tall, seated effigy in bronze was unveiled at the Royal Society for British Artists in London. Two years after that, it was installed outside the Nigerian House of Representatives, in a ceremony at which Elizabeth expressed her hopes that the sculpture might serve as a reminder that the tradition of parliamentary democracy, 'which has been so quickly absorbed and developed by Nigerians, will be maintained when Nigeria becomes an independent member of the Commonwealth.'

For readers of the *West African Review*, however, the sculpture meant something rather different. When the commission was first announced in 1956, the magazine declared that the 'royal seal' had been set on the 'renown of West Africa's most famous artist'. Where the *Times* saw in it a 'requisite sense of regal dignity', and the *Daily Mail* grumbled about 'a distinct Africanisation of the features', the *Review* praised it as a daring fusion of modernism with West African aesthetics. Photographs of the commission offer similarly contrasting perspectives. One shows the artist in overalls, crouched beside the nearly-finished figure in clay while being glared down at by Reid Dick's neoclassical sculptures of David Livingstone and Franklin D. Roosevelt at the back of the studio. Another shows Enwonwu in a three-piece suit, standing beside the fur-coated Queen at the private view. As they gaze up past the bronze folds of dress to the figure, they appear to share in a comfortable intimacy earned during the sittings. (While the artist directed her poses, the Queen asked congenially after his family.)

Enwonwu's *Portrait of the Queen* provoked an extraordinary divergence of opinion. By this time, the artist was used to it. He knowingly provoked tabloid fury with his ostentatious lifestyle – flower pinned to his lapel, driving his American Packard through post-war London – while winning establishment acclaim. He had been awarded an MBE in 1955 and the royal commission brought with it extensive coverage on the BBC, membership of the Royal Society and a role as Art Advisor to the Nigerian government.

This month, Tate Modern opens the long-anticipated exhibition, 'Nigerian Modernism' (9 October–10 May 2026). In spite of its title, this landmark show makes it clear that looking at modernism in Nigerian art as a singular, coherent movement is as obvious a mistake as trying to conceive of a unified 'modernism' *tout court*. Rather, the exhibition demonstrates how more than 50 artists, represented by some 250 works spanning half a century, arrived at their own distinct answer to the question of what, exactly, modernity meant for and in Nigeria.

Fittingly, Enwonwu's own role in the story is presented in a way that preserves the ambivalence it has always possessed. With the second room of nine in the exhibition devoted to his work, Enwonwu might appear – as some scholars have long insisted that he is – merely as a kind of bridging figure. In this reckoning, he took up the baton from the earliest pioneers of modern sensibility in Nigerian art and carried it forward but, hampered by the extent of his colonial education, he could only hand it on to a younger generation shaped by the independence struggle.

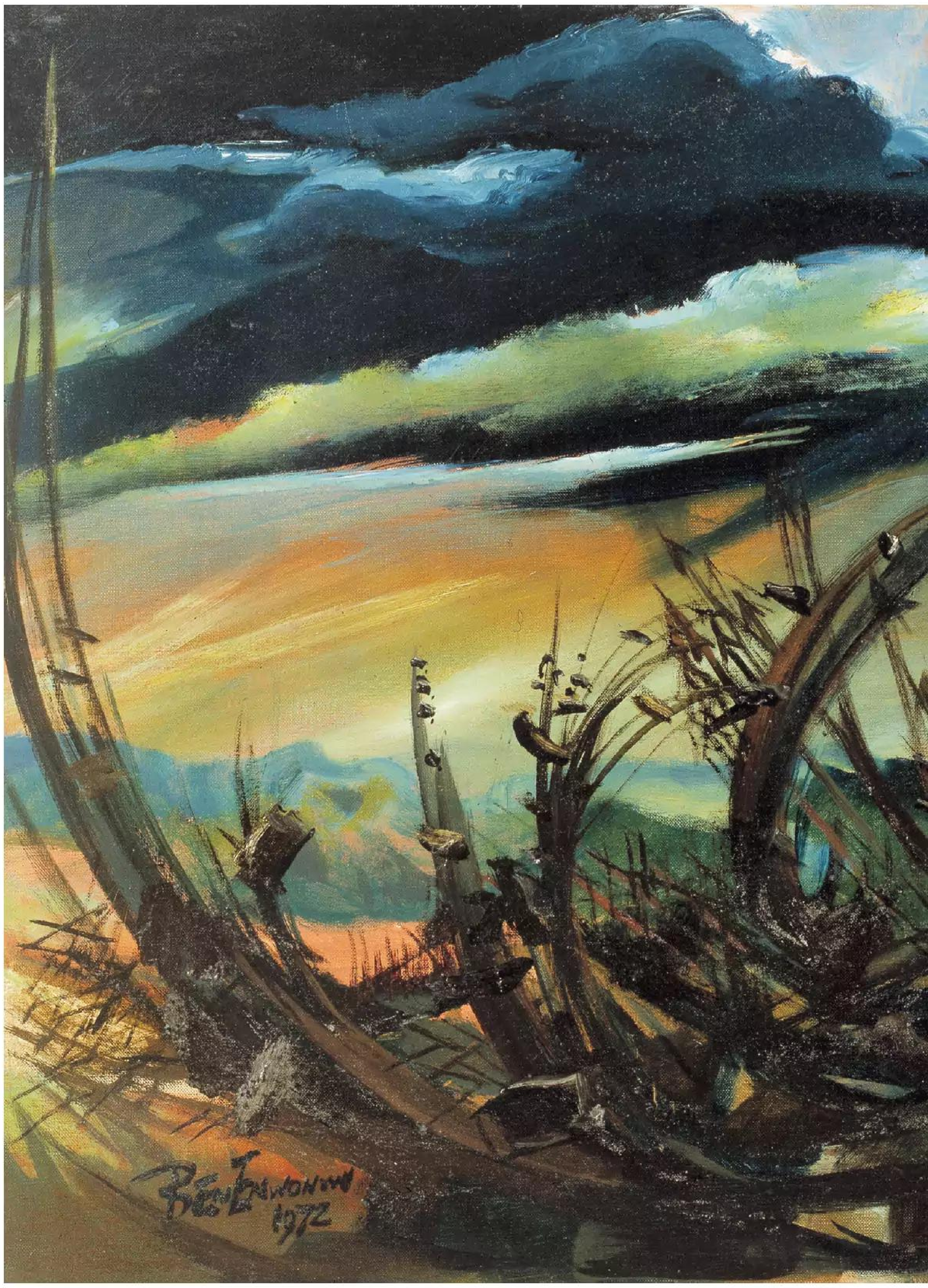
Yet Enwonwu's career did not stop with Nigeria's independence in 1960. It developed over the entire period considered in the exhibition, from the 1930s to his death in 1994. With more than 50 works, this is his most significant showing in London since the 1950s. What it suggests above all is that Enwonwu's twists and turns mirrored those of the nascent Nigerian state. Like any master political operator, he learned how to play to different audiences simultaneously, while also defining his own positions on the role of art in politics (and vice versa). Like Picasso, he kept meticulous records of how his art and thought developed in pace with the changing world around him. Today, Enwonwu remains one of his era's most eloquent guides to the complex and conflicting forces that defined it.

His relatives diagnosed *agwu*, an Igbo concept meaning visionary access to the metaphysical realm

Benedict Chukwukadibia Enwonwu was perfectly placed to play different and not always compatible roles. He was born in 1917 in Onitsha, a cosmopolitan city on the eastern shore of the River Niger and thus the western fringe of traditional Igbo territory, which had been chosen as the colonial provincial headquarters. Enwonwu's father, Emeka, was a locally renowned sculptor. His death in 1921 and the death in childhood four years earlier of Enwonwu's twin brother, Jacob, were the key events of the artist's young life. According to his principal biographer, Sylvester Okwunodu Ogbechie, he became introspective, preferring the company of the puppets he would craft out of plants and clay. His relatives diagnosed symptoms of *agwu*, an Igbo concept that attributed to him visionary access to the metaphysical realm which, if not channelled appropriately into creative practice, could spell deviancy.

At the age of 14, Enwonwu was selected for a new course at Government College, Ibadan, established with a view to training up a generation of Nigerian art teachers. Here he became the protégé of the Englishman Kenneth C. Murray, a figure whose influence on modern Nigerian art is as inescapable as it is now contested. For Murray, principles of European aesthetics, such as perspective, were viewed as corrosive to the creativity of his charges. Instead, he wanted to train them only in the techniques

His paintings recall both modernist experiments with flattening the picture plane and traditional Igbo *uli* aesthetics



of Western pictorial art such as mixing paints and laying washes, rather than its subjects. Murray's chief rival as a pedagogue, Aina Onabolu, contended instead that it was patronising to deny Africans the opportunity to learn from Western traditions; his own Reynolds-inspired portraits of Lagosian figures are on view at the Tate. It was Murray's approach, however, that had the backing of the colonial government. No small irony, then, that when Murray's specially selected group of five artists were displayed at the Zwemmer Gallery in 1937, William Rothenstein declared his satisfaction that London 'should have real Africans doing African art rather than Europeans doing pseudo-African art.'

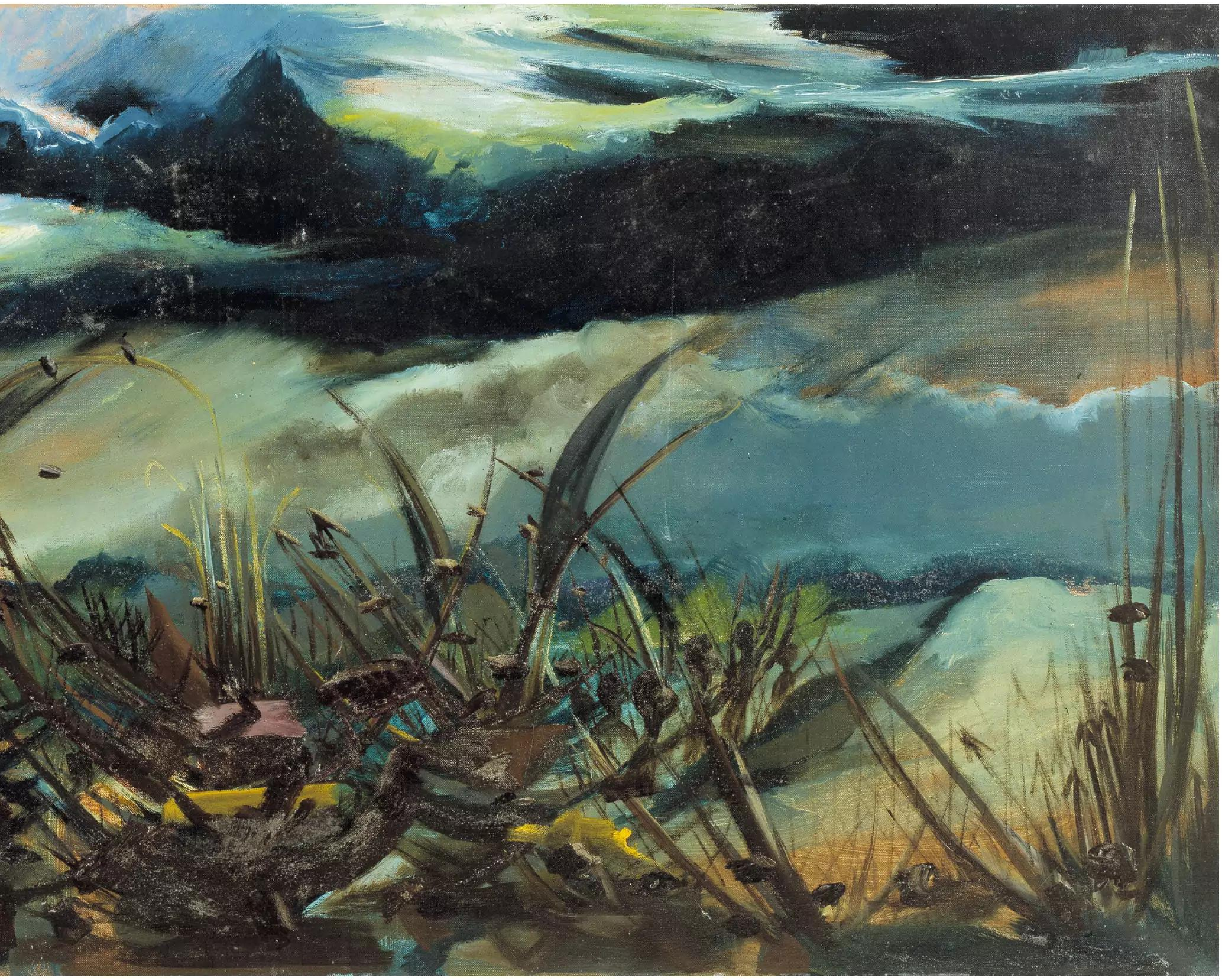
Looking at Enwonwu's early works, it can be difficult to recapture both the British establishment's impression of their 'authenticity' and the anecdotes of prominent modernists declaring their genius. ('Why go on?', Max Ernst was reported to have exclaimed despairingly at the Zwemmer.) Following Murray's teaching, his watercolours are predominantly quaint genre scenes of everyday West African life. But their preoccupation with intricacy of pattern, on the one hand, and sinuosity of line on the other do call to mind both modernist experiments with flattening the picture plane and traditional Igbo *uli* aesthetics. They were, at any rate, something new.

There followed a spell as an art teacher in the Murray method in Benin City where Enwonwu found new sources of inspiration in the ancient kingdom's aesthetic traditions. A solo exhibition in Lagos in 1943 brought him to the attention of the director of Shell Petroleum, who sponsored further training at the Slade in London. Enwonwu was not the Slade's typical recruit – apart from the fact he was its first African student, he had a flourishing professional career yet only a teacher-training certificate to his name. He was ordered to take remedial drawing classes.

Enwonwu's own view of his varied and very long education was straightforward: 'My mind was open to learning all I could, but I was quite determined to sift away all the influences and use what was beneficial to me.' He became just as good at knowing what was bad for him – when an article in *Ebony* in the late 1940s tried to yoke his vivid palette to the influence of Van Gogh, Enwonwu came up with a memorable riposte: 'In the fierce sunlight of Nigeria, only the primary colours survive.'

Survival seems always to have been an issue for Enwonwu. He was 'bound', he said, to express 'the political aspirations of his time' – and 'for such expressions to be true, they must be an embodiment of the struggle for self-preservation'. By the time of his exhibition at the Marina Center in Lagos, 1949, he had developed a mature and distinctive style in both painting and sculpture. The *Africa Dances* series, begun in 1949, marked the beginning of a painterly obsession with the Onitsha-Igbo masquerade tradition that would last until the end of his life. He continued producing works with the title *Africa Dances*, while focusing in later years on masquerade characters, as in the series begun in the 1960s named after *Agbogho Mmuo*, the maiden spirit, or his works of the 1980s–90s depicting the male spirit *Ogolo*. His portrait sculptures in ebony or Indian mango wood exhibited a deep engagement with architectonic forms learned from African sculpture, which

Courtesy and © Ben Enwonwu Foundation



Storm over Biafra, 1972, Ben Enwonwu, oil on canvas, 78.6 × 154.3cm.
National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

the British press considered to elevate him from the 'pale copycat perversity' of European artists looking at African art, and which gained him the patronage of Jacob Epstein.

Enwonwu also embarked on successful exhibition tours of the United States and developed a friendship with Léopold Sédar Senghor, the poet of *Négritude* and future president of Senegal. All of these influences were perhaps first fully harnessed by Enwonwu in *Anyanwu* (1954–55), one of his earliest sculptural masterpieces. Installed in front of the National Museum, Lagos, *Anyanwu* presents in bronze the sinuous, elongated form of a female figure. Her head is derived from the famous Benin portrait sculpture of Idia, the Queen Mother; her body is at the same time a reworking of an earlier Enwonwu painting, a response to the pan-African aesthetics of the Harlem Renaissance, an Igbo salutation to *Anyanwu* (the sun), and a Senghorian hymn to the Black feminine ideal. For Enwonwu, it symbolised 'the rising nation'.

Life in the new nation, however, brought with it a new series of struggles – from within and without. At an exhibition in 1960 marking independence, Enwonwu was sidelined in favour of a new movement that had emerged from the Nigeria College of Arts, Science and Technology in Zaria. The Zaria Rebels, as they became known, promoted an aesthetic philosophy of 'Natural Synthesis', which found its most celebrated expression in Uche Okeke's swirling abstract constructions, incorporating Igbo *uli* patterns. Their cause was taken up by the German-born critic Ulli Beier, who in his review of the exhibition emphasised Enwonwu's training in London, denying its claim to be 'authentically "Nigerian"'. Enwonwu railed against these upstarts as merely following the West 'into the abstract jungle': 'To produce a good work of African painting or sculpture does not mean imitation of modern European artists – abstract art & what not; – nor the even worse kind of weakness in copying old African traditional art'.

Enwonwu's attitude towards the Zarianists gradually softened – they were, after all, invested in the same project to 'prove to the world that African Art can be [...] continued'; he saw Beier, however, as the primary villain among a wave of interloping tastemakers. Beier went on to co-found the Mbari Club in Ibadan; edit its mouthpiece, *Black Orpheus*;

and also initiate with Susanne Wenger the independent Osogbo School, which favoured Surrealist automatism and a Dubuffet-like privileging of the untaught artist. There were also Cold War undercurrents at play; while Enwonwu remained an impassioned voice for Nigerian non-alignment, Beier's operations were accepting funding from the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), a covert subsidiary of the CIA.

In his art, Enwonwu shifted towards ever-more prominent and ambitious political works. A monumental bronze statue of Nnamdi Azikiwe, revolutionary leader prior to independence and now the first Nigerian President, was installed in Onitsha in 1961. The same year he painted *Going*; described by Okwui Enwezor as an 'exemplary' instance of 'the idea of cultural sovereignty and the uniqueness of postcolonial African modernity', this three-metre-wide canvas presents a prodigious cast of characters drawn from West African masquerades alongside graceful, anonymous feminine figures, interlocking in complex architectonic configurations that lend them both the stasis of a carved frieze and the fluidity of an ethereal pageant. In 1964, he was commissioned to produce a bronze sculpture for the headquarters of the National Electric Power Authority in Lagos. *Sango*, named after the Yoruba thunder god, is a 14-foot, loincloth-clad figure. Rippling with muscles, his eyes are cast heavenward, while his features derive from a *c.* 13th-century bronze figure of an *Ooni* (king), one of the famous lost-wax castings of Ife, the ancient city to which the Yoruba trace their origins.

Sango is perhaps the most famous public sculpture in Lagos – a fitting emblem for Enwonwu's fiercely held conviction that an independent Nigerian state could rise above ethnic rivalries. Clouds, however, were already gathering on the horizon. Enwonwu led the Nigerian delegation to Dakar in April 1966 for the First World Festival of Negro Arts – now recognised as the high-water mark of the first phase of African cultural nationalism, but also a moment when the cracks in the pan-African idealism of *Négritude* were showing. In January 1966, an attempted coup in which the Nigerian Prime Minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, was assassinated, had brought ethnic tensions to boiling point, leading to the declaration of the independent Igbo Republic of Biafra the following year. Chinua Achebe described the ensuing three years of brutal civil war, in which the secession was eventually quelled with extensive British support, as a 'cataclysmic experience that changed the history of Africa'. As an Igbo in a government position, Enwonwu was in jeopardy in Lagos; he fled to Onitsha until it was bombarded by Nigerian government forces, destroying much of his art collection, after which he escaped to London. After publicly questioning the secession and calling for a new Igbo leadership, he was branded a traitor back in Biafra.

Enwonwu spoke of his decade-long series of portraits of wartime refugees, *Children of Biafra* (1966–76), as a kind of atonement for having failed to do more in the conflict. In a superb, brooding landscape on show at the Tate, *Storm over Biafra* (1972), he realised both an expression of elemental tragedy and a resounding call for national introspection. From the end of the conflict in 1970 until the end of his life, Enwonwu continued to express his belief in the potential of art to forge a multicultural, postcolonial Nigerian identity. His depictions of Igbo masquerades became ever more consummate in their essential rhythm, their harnessing of both modernist and African strategies of geometry, composition and colour to enact the spirituality of movement. Most significantly, after falling in love (unrequited) with the Yoruba princess Adetutu Ademiluyi, granddaughter of the Ooni of Ife, he painted her portrait in 1974. With her calm yet ambiguous glance back over her shoulder, wearing elaborate stately clothing and headdress, it is no surprise that *Tutu* – prints of which soon came to adorn homes throughout Nigeria – has been dubbed the African Mona Lisa. Seen in the Biafran context, it is also, as Ben Okri has written, 'a symbol of the phoenix rising'.

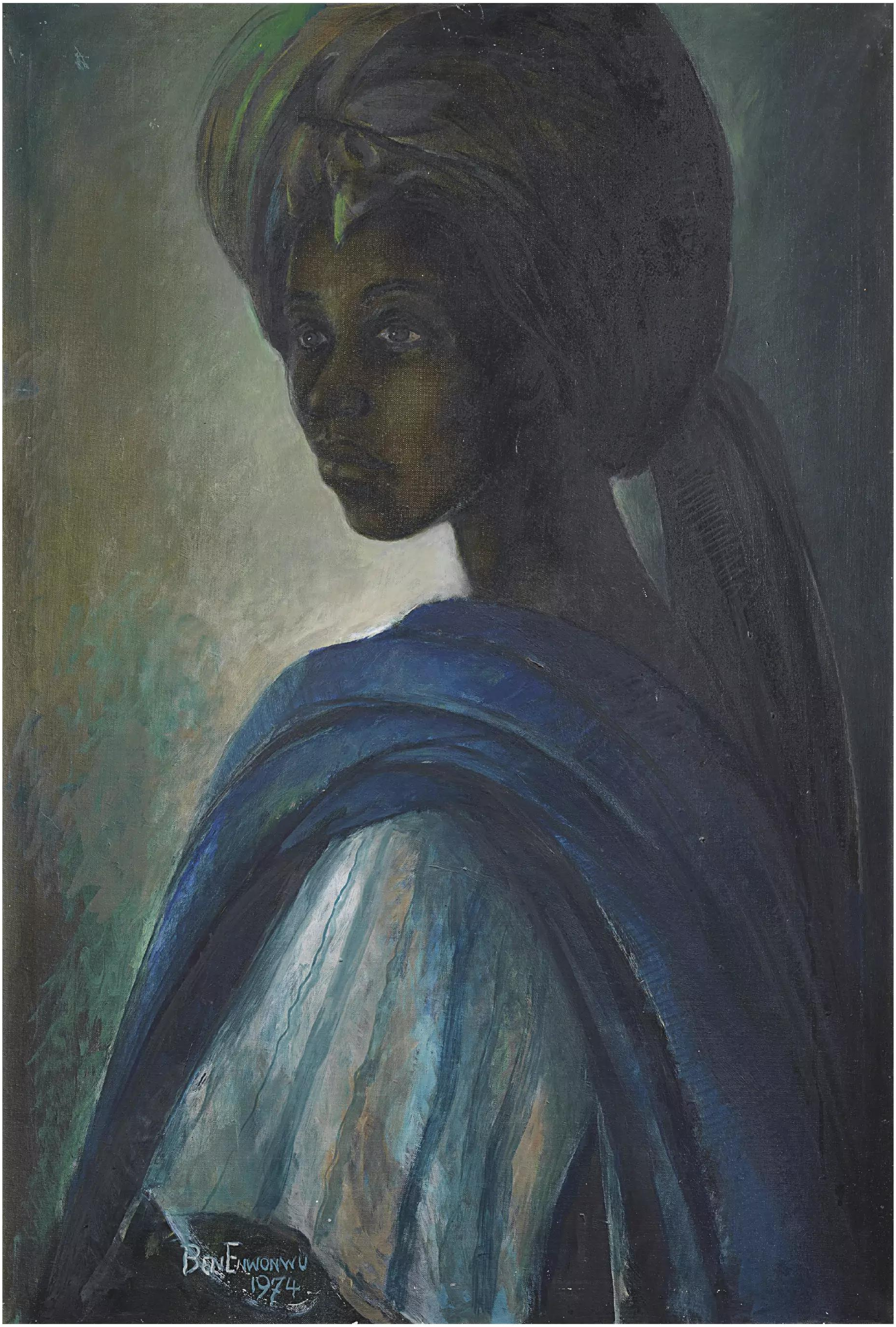
Just before Enwonwu's death in 1994 – an era of military juntas and civil unrest – *Tutu* was stolen. His statue of Queen Elizabeth also went missing sometime after independence and was recovered in the caretakers' office at the National Museum in Lagos in 2000, the year after democracy had been reinstated. It was installed at the British Ambassador's residence in 2018 ahead of the Prince of Wales's visit, its first royal audience in 70 years. The same year, *Tutu*, having been rediscovered hanging in a London flat, went back on display in Lagos – a fitting symbol of a new era of cultural optimism and a willingness to revisit the struggles of Nigeria's modernists, in which the Tate's exhibition is the latest milestone. Even after his death, the artworks of Ben Enwonwu have not lost their uncanny ability to reflect Nigeria's fortunes.

View of *Anyanwu* (1954–55) by Ben Enwonwu
at the National Museum, Lagos

© Ben Enwonwu Foundation

Samuel Reilly is writing a PhD about the historiography of Nigerian art at the University of St Andrews.

'Nigerian Modernism' is at Tate Modern, London, from 8 October to 10 May 2026 (www.tate.org.uk).


BEN ENWONWU
1974

Tutu, 1974, Ben Enwonwu, oil on canvas, 97 × 66.5cm. Private collection

Courtesy Bonhams; © Ben Enwonwu Foundation

Into the

As a retrospective of Hew Locke's excavations of imperial history opens at the Yale Center for British Art, he talks to *Apollo* about producing some of the defining images of the 2020s

BY FATEMA AHMED

Installation view of *Armada* by Hew Locke at Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, 2019

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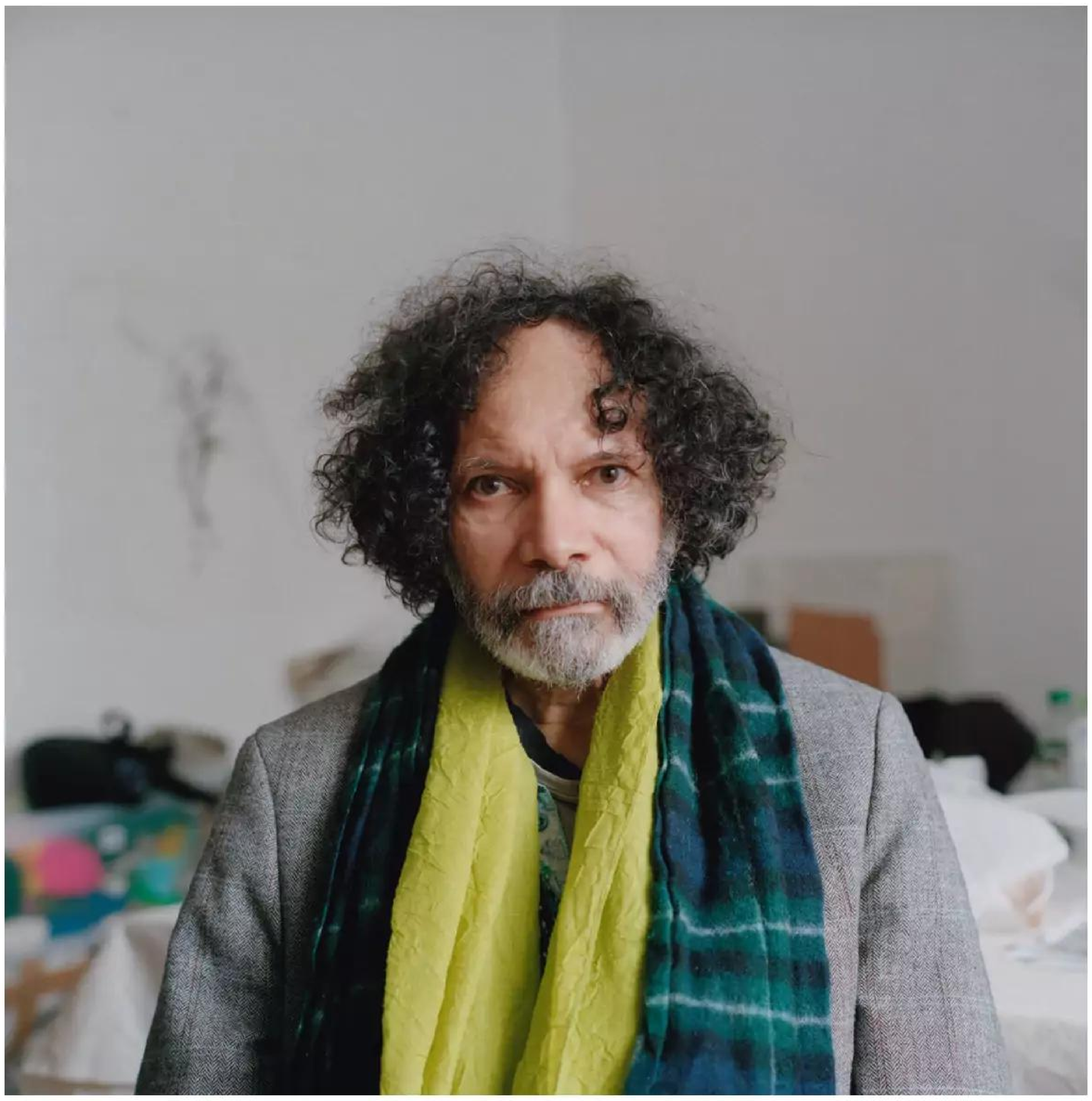

Hew Locke, photographed in at his studio
in London by Toby Glanville, in September 2025

Hew Locke can't remember exactly when, on 7 June 2020, he first heard that the statue of Edward Colston in Bristol had been pulled off its plinth and thrown into the city's harbour. While he thinks it may have been when the *Art Newspaper* asked him for comment, that also doesn't seem right to him: 'In my mind – memory plays tricks on you – that's the story I tell myself.' But now, he wonders, surely he heard the news on the radio first? What he is adamant about is that he was 'stunned'.

When Black Lives Matter protestors deposed the late 19th-century statue of the 17th-century slave trader, Locke had more reason to be surprised than most. In Bristol, the continued presence of the statue in the heart of the city had been an issue for years, but it wasn't a national or international debate and Colston's name was not well known, except to historians of slavery or of Victorian civic sculpture. In 2006, however, the Bristol arts venue Spike Island had invited Locke to take part in the 'British Art Show 6'. The four pieces in his *Restoration* series are large-format photographs of statues in the city – of Colston, Edmund Burke, the abolitionist Samuel Morley and Edward VII – mounted on to aluminium and MDF and then bedecked with gold medallions, jewellery and decorations attached to the surfaces. By turning a two-dimensional representation of an object into a different kind of third-dimensional representation, the works blur the boundaries between mediums, between photography and sculpture, in a way that is typical of Locke. The gaudiness of the trinkets are also a challenge to notions of propriety, of what is and isn't said by public sculpture. At first glance, the decoration seems merely external – a festive get-up for sombre statues – but it is the opposite of a cover-up.

The statue of Colston was proposed and mostly paid for by a local Liberal, who wanted to celebrate his philanthropy in Bristol, skating over the fact that Colston's fortune came from his shares in the Royal African Company, which had a monopoly for a time on the English slave trade in west Africa, transporting some 188,000 people to the Americas. In 2006, Locke's dressing up of the statue was a thought experiment. In 2020, the protestors' pulling it down was a rupture in reality that made the artist's earlier work prescient. (If only, some commented, he had been allowed to festoon Colston for real, diminishing the figure by seeming to celebrate it, thus allowing it to stay where it was.)

All of this happened early on in the pandemic. Although exhibitions can be a long time in the making and public commissions particularly slow to achieve, to casual onlookers, it might seem as if Locke's career to date falls into two phases: before and after the pandemic. In recent years, an extraordinary string of exhibitions and commissions have raised his profile and brought his work in front of a mass audience for the first time. In March 2022, a large-scale installation piece, *The Procession*, occupied the Duveen Galleries at Tate Britain until the following spring, while in the autumn, four sculptures by Locke filled the niches of the Met's Fifth Avenue facade for the best part of eight months. Later that year, four equestrian *Ambassadors* sculptures were a highlight of the 'In the Black Fantastic' group show at the Hayward Gallery in London. In 2024, an installation called *Armada* (2017–19) formed part of one of the most appealing rooms in 'Entangled Pasts', an

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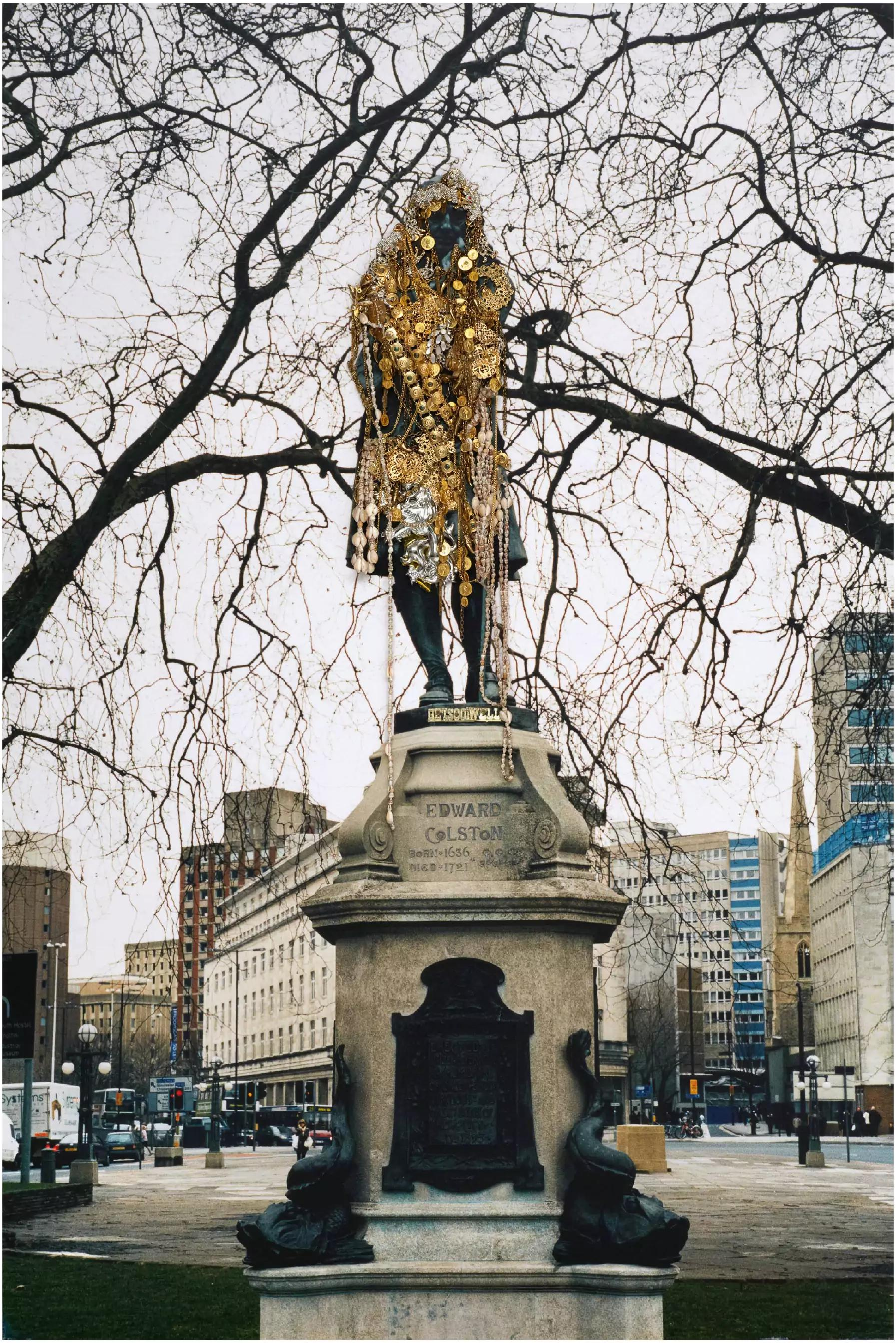
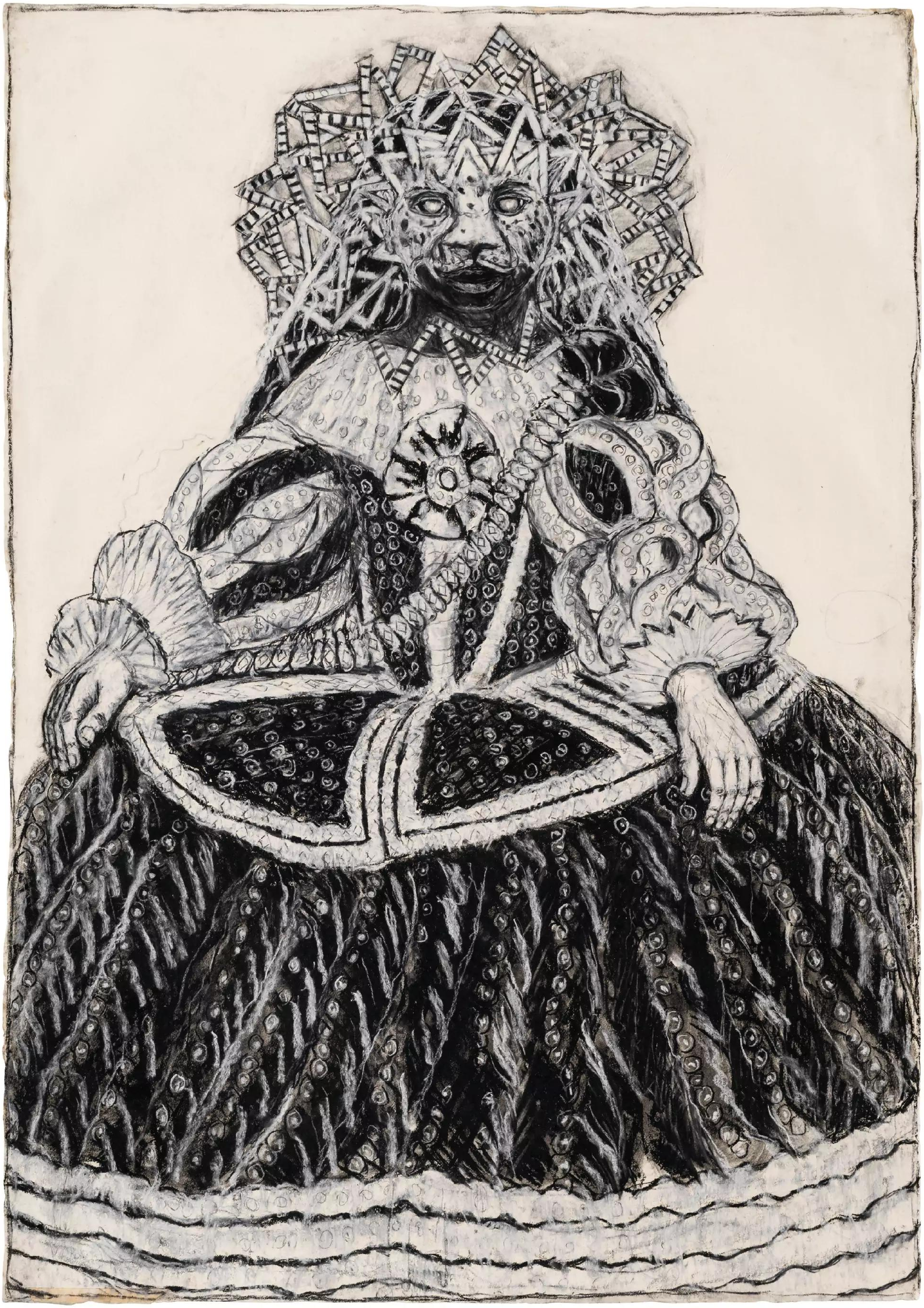

EDWARD
COLSTON
BORN 1636
DIED 1721

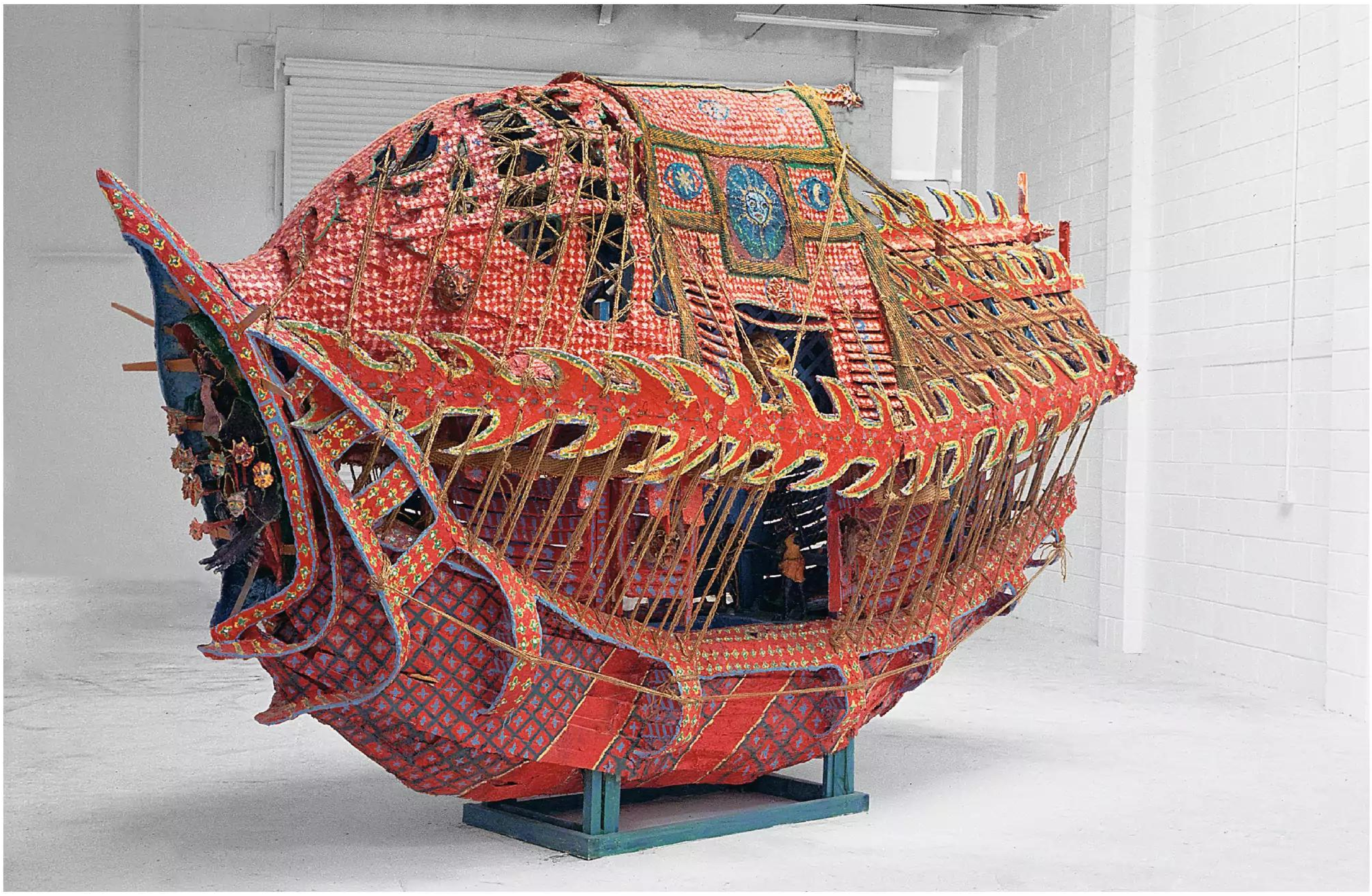
Colston, from the series *Restoration*, 2006, Hew Locke (b. 1959), chromogenic print mounted on aluminium with mixed media, 183 × 122 × 7cm. British Council Collection

Courtesy the artist/Hales Gallery ; © Hew Locke/All rights reserved, DACS 2025



Infanta 2, 1997–8, Hew Locke, pastel and charcoal, 107.2 × 75.5cm. Collection of the artist

Courtesy and © Hew Locke



Ark, 1994, Hew Locke, papier-mâché, cardboard, wood, steel and mixed media, 335 × 457 × 183cm. No longer extant

exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts in London looking at how the institution's own history has shaped ideas about empire and migration. Also in 2024, in 'Hew Locke: what have we here?' at the British Museum, Locke and his wife, the curator Indra Khanna, were invited to present objects in its collection relating to Britain's imperial history in Africa, India and the Caribbean, together with new works by Locke.

Locke is one of the most in-demand British artists working today, but the flurry of post-2022 activity obscures how consistent his interests have been, how they have widened and deepened over time and how the art world has caught up with his work – as events in the wider world have reflected his concerns – rather than the other way round. An exhibition opening at the Yale Center for British Art this month, 'Hew Locke: Passages', is a rare opportunity to see how Locke has become the artist he is (2 October –11 January 2026). By presenting three decades of his work in one place, it features work that hasn't been seen for a long time, or at all – and, in Yale, a chance to see it free of the requirements of British institutions reflecting on their own histories. (British audiences should regret that the exhibition won't travel, but the Yale monograph will be the most comprehensive account of Locke's work for years to come.)

When I talk to Locke at the end of August, he seems more relaxed about the retrospective than any artist with as big a show coming up I have ever met. The reason, he says, is because after having made so much new work in recent years in the difficult conditions of the pandemic, at Yale, 'It's all historic work, so all I need to do is show up.' He's very clear, however, that he regards it as 'a big deal'. Neither the Yale show nor any of his recent commissions would have seemed possible when he was a young art student, when 'a career as somebody selling art was not something which was even considered'. His goal, when he started out in the 1980s, was 'the standard goal for somebody my age back then […] to become a record album designer. Today that seems so bizarre, but that really was a goal.'

It may have seemed impossible to make a living by art but, for Locke, art has always been the family business. Both his parents were artists: his mother, Leila, an English figurative and landscape painter; his father, Donald, a Guyanese sculptor of largely abstract work that is only just getting its institutional dues (the first major Donald Locke survey show was at Spike Island, Bristol, earlier this year and is now at Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, until 22 February 2026). Hew was born in Edinburgh in 1959 and moved to Georgetown in Guyana with his mother and siblings when he was six, spending another six months in Edinburgh in 1969–70, before returning to the UK from Guyana in 1980. He went on to study fine art at the Falmouth School of Art and then, in the early '90s, sculpture at the Royal College of Art.

If Locke had gone to Goldsmiths, as he might have done, he would have been in the same year as the YBAs, he says, a group of artists whose work – as the popular caricature of it goes (flippant, cynical, ahistorical) – couldn't have been more different than his. Nor could his own preoccupations, once he'd begun to work out what they were, have been less fashionable. It was residencies at the Delfina

Courtesy and © Hew Locke

Foundation and then Gasworks in south London, where he had his studio for six years, that helped him refine his ideas and find new ways of making. For Locke, Gasworks, at a time when the art world was more insular, 'was an international thing before international became a thing'. In his conversations with artists from all over the world, the real question, he says, was, 'Where do we fit into this thing?' (The 'thing' being '"Sensation", Saatchi, stuff like that'.) Those conversations sustained him for years afterwards, as many as 15, he reckons, and meant that 'I could be in the studio by myself because I'd worked out lots of ideas.'

As Locke tells it, the '90s was a time almost of hiding away. While he was aware of the wider art world – and admired much of the work that was attracting attention – he needed to find his own way: 'My metaphor used to be: [I'm] in a forest, but there's the Serengeti plains out there and there are lions waiting to take you down and I'm like, no, I'm going to stay here for a while until I feel strong enough to head out in the plains fast enough to be able to move in this situation.'

An interest in the British Empire and the visual manifestations of its power that hide in plain sight has brought Locke to prominence

Locke's first major work, *Ark* (1994), exhibited at his RCA graduation show, predates this period of germination and strength-training for the art-world savannah, but it was a remarkable statement of intent, inspired by sources that still inspire him, executed in unusual art materials – cardboard and papier mâché, even Locke's work bench – and instantly pleasing to the eye. *Ark* is a boat with a puffer-fish profile, painted in a bright red and patterns Locke derived from Guyanese architecture or Indian miniature painting. Its immediate inspiration was an 18th-century model for an East India Company barge in Calcutta. It was well received, travelling to several UK venues but also, Locke felt – and this was true of his cardboard works from this decade – misunderstood as a work of folk art rather than sculpture, and conceptual sculpture at that. It was in the mid '90s that Locke says that he stopped talking to people about Guyana to avoid questions about his work such as, 'What carnival have you made this for?'

Describing something as 'colourful' or 'vibrant' can be a way of dismissing detail, of suggesting that an object or a work of art is not as serious as the sombre or monochrome kind. In a striking set of drawings made between 1996 and 1998, Locke seems to have worked through this problem by taking the subjects of European paintings and redoing them in charcoal and black and white pastels. The results are much harsher versions of, for example, the Infanta from Velázquez's *Las Meninas* and Manet's young fife player. They are harsher because they have been bleached of colour, yet at the same time more ornamented, every inch of their bodies and clothes covered in patterns of skulls, eyes and hands, among other motifs.

After this work of subtraction, it's almost as if Locke felt ready to pile all his influences and interests – as well as the colour – back into his work, reconfigured and refined as the occasion required. That first sculpture, *Ark*, no longer exists, though. After the costs of storing it became too great, Locke had to let it be destroyed.

What has survived, however, is his enduring love of boats, which has expressed itself over the years in a series of installations, perhaps most memorably at the Folkestone Triennial in 2011. In a work called *For Those in Peril on the Sea*, Locke suspended 70 model boats in the vault of the ceiling of a parish church so that viewers could see only their hulls from below. In subsequent boat-based works with more attacking titles such as *Armada*, first installed at the Ikon Gallery in Birmingham, the models have been hung at a lower height, preventing the viewer from crossing the space they take up. In the UK, the words 'small boats' has, for some time, been a form of shorthand for asylum-seekers crossing the English Channel in the absence of less dangerous routes. When I ask Locke if the meaning of his small boats has changed over the years, he says he's very conscious of the phrase. 'I think of "small boats" as two different things. There are the small boats we talk about today, but then there are the small boats which went to get the troops from Dunkirk.' And 'armada', he points out, is simply the Spanish name for a fleet; it's the British, harking back to the failed invasion attempt of 1588, who have loaded the word with more negative connotations.

If the maritime works are among Locke's most beautiful, it is his interest in the imagery of the British Empire and the visual manifestations of its power that hide in plain sight that have brought him to prominence. Perhaps Locke's real achievement is to take signs of pomp and circumstance seriously, to reveal how surfaces can conceal. To make something plain is to be straightforward, to make your meaning clear. But the plain meaning of a monochrome statue or a bust tells us nothing except that the subject was once meant to be admired, and rarely for what reason. Locke's *Souvenir* series (2018–ongoing) takes this idea to the point of absurdity by taking the busts of Victorian and Edwardian royals made of Parian ware (an unglazed porcelain that made for a cheap marble substitute) and covering them in baubles, replica medals and headpieces. *Souvenir 8 (Edward VII in Masonic Regalia)* from 2019 is a particularly attractive affair; with the sovereign's medal- and jewellery-strewn headgear splitting the difference between a crown and a turban, which seems appropriate for someone who was, after all, the Emperor of India.

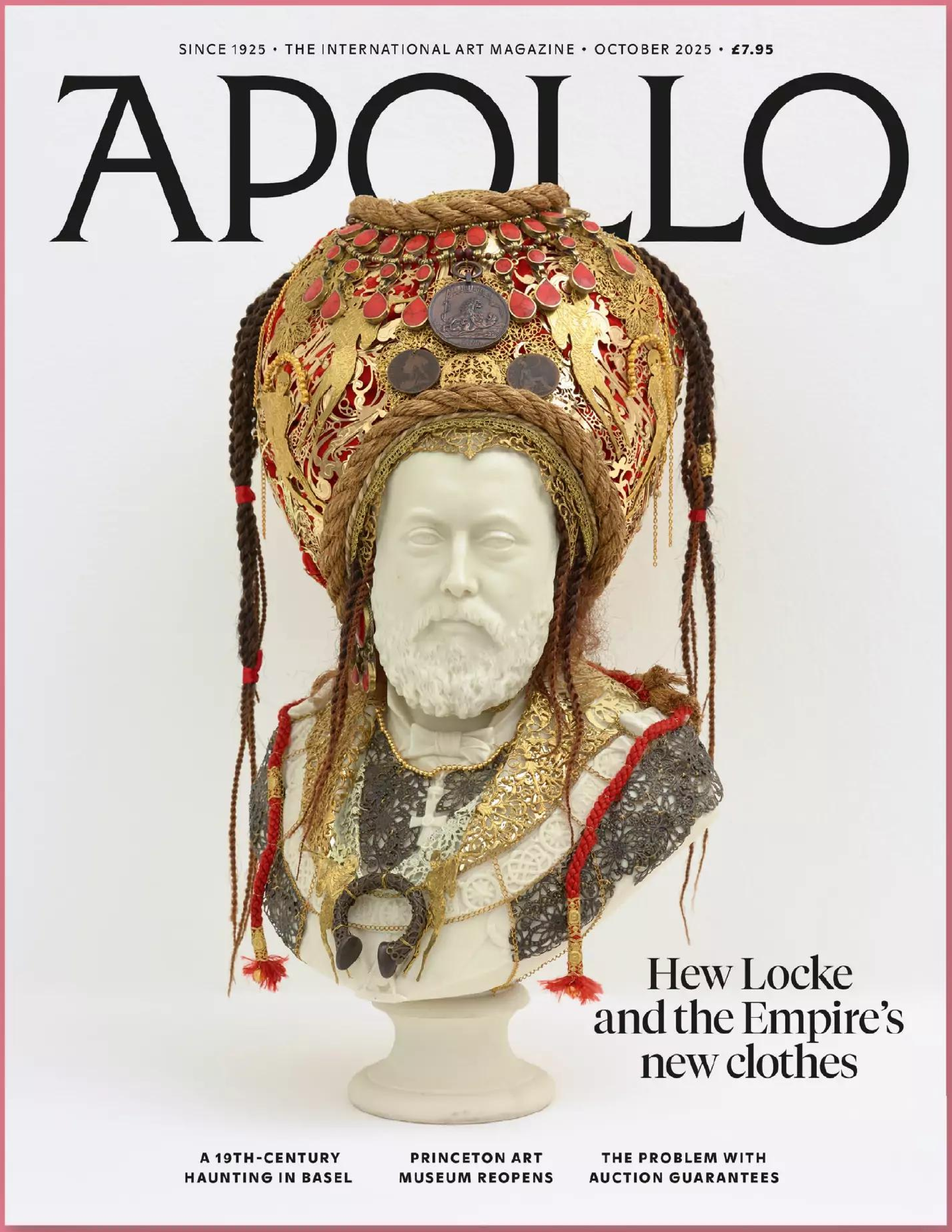
In this and many other acts of decoration, Locke's use of ornament is a useful, often witty act of complication, his art a playful challenge to monolithic ways of thinking. By asking objects where they have really come from, viewers might also come up with more interesting responses to the question Locke once asked himself and has answered more than successfully: 'Where do we fit into this thing?'

Fatema Ahmed is deputy editor of Apollo.

'Hew Locke: Passages' is at the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, from 2 October–11 January 2026. For more details, go to britishart.yale.edu.

Photo: Anna Arca; © Hew Locke

Installation view of *The Procession* (2022) by Hew Locke in the Duveen Galleries at Tate Britain, London, in 2022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No guarantees

The sale of Emily Fisher Landau's collection at Sotheby's New York in November 2023

Photo: Angela Weiss/AFP via Getty Images

Are risk-free auctions a safe bet? **JANE MORRIS** investigates

Giovanni Antonio Canal's paintings are immediately recognisable but rarely set pulses racing. That changed this summer, when a 'Canaletto' from the 1730s, *Venice, the Return of the Bucintoro on Ascension Day*, sold at Christie's London for a record £31.9m. It once belonged to Robert Walpole and hung in 10 Downing Street, and later Houghton Hall. One art advisor at the auction said it was 'the perfect picture' and added, 'it shows that even when sentiment is down, if you bring a ten-out-of-ten picture, the market will respond'. But unusually for an Old Master, it had a diamond symbol on its online listing – indicating that the work carried a third-party guarantee.

Sometimes called an irrevocable bid, a guarantee means that someone – either a third-party buyer or the auction house itself – will buy a work for an agreed but secret price if there are no bids or the work doesn't meet the reserve. It is a very contemporary financial arrangement for a traditional picture.

Guaranteed works are everywhere. Lindsay Dewar, head of analytics at ArtTactic, says that nearly 73 per cent of lots by hammer value were guaranteed at Christie's, Sotheby's and Phillips's post-war and contemporary evening sales in the first six months of the year. This is a record high – up 20 per cent on last year – and represents a $400m outlay. Guarantees appear in other categories too: 72 per cent of works by hammer value were guaranteed in the Impressionist and modern sales, 11.5 per cent more than last year. Eight other works were also guaranteed in the Christie's London Old Master evening sale.

Phillips, meanwhile, is trying out a variation on the theme. It has announced that it will reduce its buyer's premium – the fee buyers pay on top of the hammer price – if the winner has placed a bid on or above the low estimate at least 48 hours before the sale. Martin Wilson, Phillips's chief executive, says this will provide 'greater certainty for sellers' and 'reward buyers who commit early', much like guarantees.

A guarantee is a bespoke deal between a seller and an auction house, which often then offloads the risk of having to buy a work to someone else. The guarantee can be set anywhere but is usually at the low estimate or a bit below. In exchange for this security, sellers make concessions. If bidding goes above the guaranteed price, they may have to give away some of this 'upside' to the guarantor, typically 15 to 20 per cent, according to insiders. The auction house also does deals on its sellers' and buyers' premiums, to come up with a package that the seller, the third party guarantor and the auction house can accept.

The reason auction houses go to all this trouble is because the competition to secure top works of art to sell is fierce. A guarantee is one way to attract a big consignment. But auction houses promise other things too. 'The consignor, and increasingly third-party guarantors, look to squeeze every last bit of marketing from the auction house,' a former Sotheby's marketer says. 'In the old days it was just the cover on the catalogue. Now it's videos, digital, marketing and exhibition tours.'

How long guarantees have existed is a matter of debate. Philip Hook, former director of Impressionist and modern art at Sotheby's, says it offered an in-house guarantee of £35,000 to secure the sale of Nicolas Poussin's *The Adoration of the Shepherds* (*c.* 1633–34) – in the face of stiff competition from London's Old Master dealers – in 1956. But guarantees remained rare until the art market boom of the early 2000s.

Venice, the Return of the Bucintoro on Ascension Day (c. 1732) by Canaletto, which sold for a record £31.9m at Christie's London in June

The strategy has always been risky. Hook says that Sotheby's lost £6,000 on the Poussin. Others have fared far worse. In 1999 the French billionaire Bernard Arnault bought Phillips and, according to art market expert Georgina Adam, offered millions in guarantees to secure consignments to compete with its larger rivals. The move backfired. One auction alone – the 2001 sale of the collection of Nathan and Marion Smooke – earned only $85m against a rumoured $170m house guarantee. By 2002 Arnault had sold a majority stake in the firm to the art dealer Simon de Pury, after amassing losses of $400m.

The financial crisis of 2008 was another low. Christie's and Sotheby's had gambled millions of dollars to secure consignments. In his book *Art of the Deal*, Noah Horowitz that says Sotheby's laid out $902m in 2007 alone. Opinions vary on how much the two houses lost once the market crashed, but the *Wall Street Journal* reported that by the end of 2008 the two houses were holding an estimated $63m in art they had been obliged to buy.

After this sobering experience guarantees largely disappeared. When they returned, the houses did everything they could to lay off the risk – to financiers and speculators who didn't have anything to do with art collecting but mostly to collectors, art dealers and other insiders. These have included Peter Brant, Pierre Chen, David Geffen and dealer/collector families such as the Nahmads and the Mugrabis.

Despite their prevalence, guarantees are not liked by everyone. Harry Smith, managing director of art advisory firm Gurr Johns, told the *Art Newspaper* in 2018 that 'guarantees have the potential to be the next big art market scandal' – and there are periodic grumblings about a lack of transparency and boring sales.

The problem, some say, is that guarantees make the apparently transparent auction process opaque, including the real price paid. Felix Salmon, chief financial correspondent at Axios, has described heavily guaranteed auctions as 'less like anonymised price-discovery mechanisms and more like gussied-up private sales'.

Whether this is true, they are certainly complicated. Auction house staff have to calculate likely results for each of the lots, the level of guarantee the client will accept to clinch the consignment, the likelihood of laying that off to the relatively small pool of guarantors and then work out the degree of risk the house is left with. If this sounds like financial macramé, that's because it is.

'Guarantees have certainly increased in "mindshare" over the past five years,' says Ben Gore, chief operating officer at Christie's and a former investment banker. 'Ultimately the choice to take a guarantee is the consignor's. But then we have to decide if we want to keep the guarantee in-house or reinsure it with a third party, which is part of a risk-management, portfolio approach. But we also reflect on what having a third-party guarantee signifies in the market.'

ArtTactic argues that guarantees can act as a barometer for the market – if you know how to read them. In 2022, when sales bounced back after the pandemic, $1.46bn of post-war and contemporary art carried guarantees. This fell to $858m last year. The $392m guaranteed in the first half of this year compares with £539m in the same period in 2024, 'underscoring the overall softness in the current market', as Dewar puts it.

The percentage guaranteed by value is another indicator: the higher the number, the less confident sellers are to put works into auction 'naked'. By taking a guarantee, they are certain the work will sell – but they could give away a lot of money if it flies past its estimate. The fact that the proportion of guaranteed post-war and contemporary works reached a record 72 per cent suggests that most sellers want a safe bet.

Safety, of course, tends to reduce the excitement around a sale. In November 2023 Sotheby's sold the collection of Emily Fisher Landau, a patron who had a private museum in Long Island City, New York. The stakes were high: the sale had an estimate of between $344.5m and $430.1m. All 31 lots in its evening sale were guaranteed, including the star lot, a portrait of Picasso's muse Marie-Thérèse Walter from 1932. While it attracted competitive bidding, many other lots did not, and 13 sold below or at the low estimate, very likely to the guarantors.

'Basically, there was so much at risk that they left no risk,' New York-based adviser Wendy Cromwell commented at the time. But the theatre of major sales was already diminishing. High-quality live streams and publicity-shy collectors mean that many more people now log in to watch and bid from home.

Photo: Wiktor Szymanowicz/Future Publishing via Getty Images

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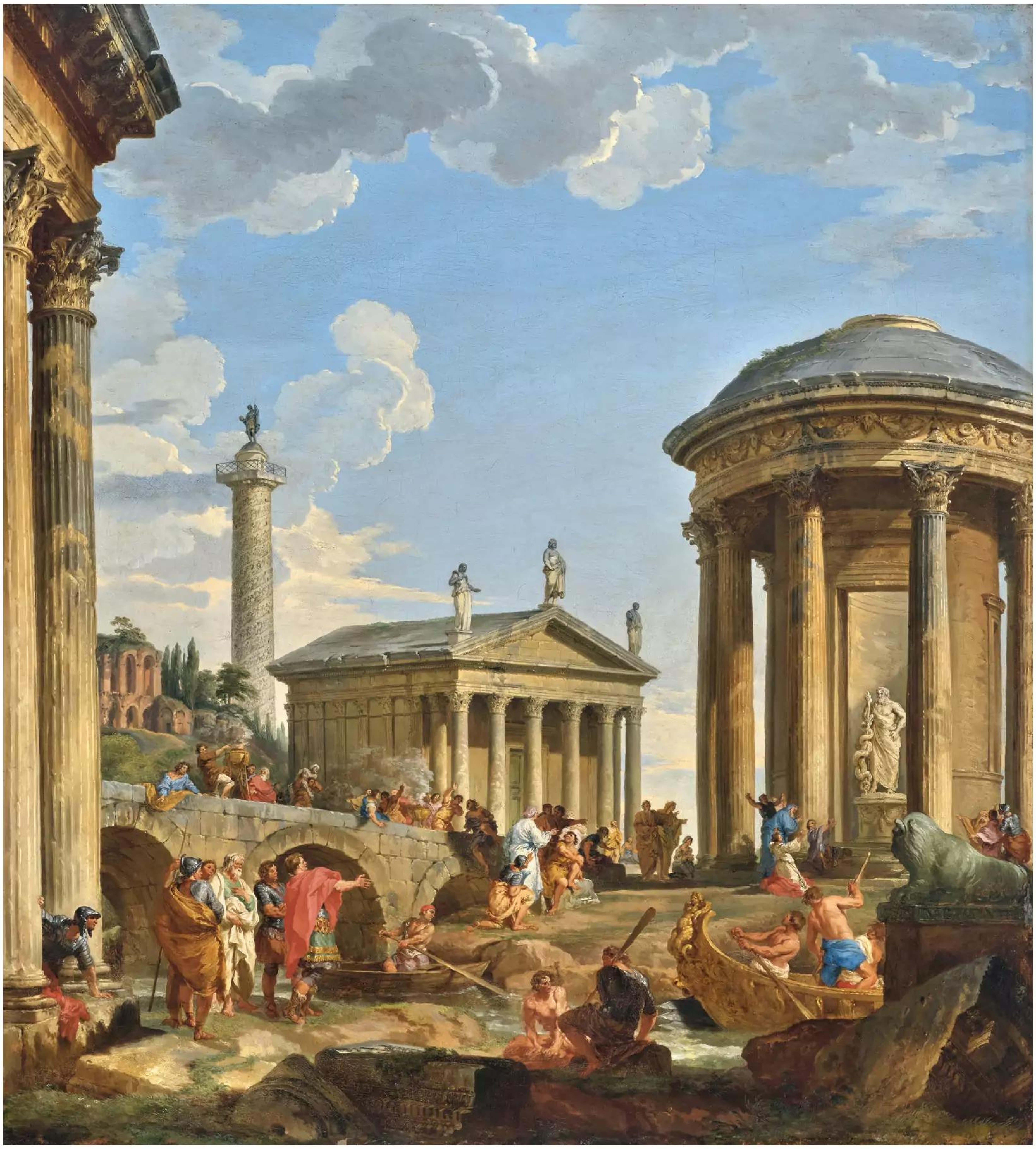

Giovanni Paolo Panini (Piacenza 1691–1765 Rome), An Offering to Aesculapius on the Isola Tiberina
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Ole Faarup with *Blossom* (1997) by Chris Ofili, which is being sold at an upcoming auction of Faarup's collection in October by Christie's London

Then there is the objection that guarantors have an unfair advantage. They know the reserve: the lowest price a seller will accept. They probably know the auction staff as well because most are also clients. And thanks to the deals on the upside and fees, if there is competition and they win, they have effectively secured the work at a discount.

'Christie's pioneered the idea that if you were the guarantor you would always get a discount, whether you had taken a flat-fee deal or a share of the upside. If you continued bidding, you would still get your percentage,' says Mari-Claudia Jiménez, co-head of art law practice at Withers and former Sotheby's chair. 'For some time at Sotheby's that wasn't the case. That changed eventually of course, because we were having a hard time attracting guarantors, as they weren't incentivised to buy a work they guaranteed.'

On the flip side, the presence of guarantors gives other bidders confidence – especially in uncertain times. 'A guarantee says, "this is a good piece, the estimate is OK and someone else is interested enough to buy it",' one art advisor told me. Perhaps more serious is the risk of what could happen if a big, 'global' guarantee deal on a major collection goes badly wrong. Margins at the top end of the market are already thin – as low as two per cent, say insiders.

On a $100m collection, an auction house will have waived its seller's fees and given the seller three quarters of its 20-per-cent buyer's fees – which leaves little behind for marketing expenses such as international exhibitions, let alone a run of unsold works. 'When you factor all that in, it is not hard to see how guarantees often end up in the red,' Jiménez says.

Guarantees are here to stay as long as consignors fear failure at a public auction. In May, Sotheby's offered a bronze bust, *Grande tête mince (Grande tête de Diego)* (1955) by Giacometti, with an estimate of $70m but no guarantee. Bidding reached $64m, then stalled. In his recent takedown of Sotheby's owner Patrick Drahi in the *New Yorker*, journalist Sam Knight describes the agony of auctioneer Oliver Barker offering the work at $64m 28 times to no avail.

'At the top end, the number of bidders can be limited and so the risk of failure can be higher than many perceive. You can't just put a [failed work] back into an auction in six months' time,' says Willem-Joost de Gier, co-founding director of art advisory Cadell. And there is a big financial impact. 'Works that pass at auction lose 32 per cent of their value on average when they finally resell,' he adds. Meanwhile, most risk 'giving away' far less than this as part of the guaranteeing process. As a result, expect all this autumn's big sales in London and New York – so far the collections of Ole Faarup, Leonard Lauder, Elaine Wynn, and Robert and Patricia Weis have been announced – to be guaranteed.

In a possibly surprising turn, Marc Spiegler, former director of Art Basel, the world's most important art fair, took aim at guarantees as part of a wider criticism of the 'financialisation of the art market' in his column for the Business of Fashion website. Partly this is because they have attracted a new class of investors – Wall Street bankers, tech entrepreneurs – who see them as a novel way to make a profit. Their ranks have, unfortunately for the image of the art market, included the likes of fraudster Inigo Philbrick, the subject of a recent BBC documentary.

'In the past quarter century we have seen various attempts, from investment funds and fractional ownership to NFTs, to treat art as an asset class similar to stocks and real estate,' Spiegler says. 'During that period, the art market has actually shrunk.' He believes that all the talk of financial returns puts off the collectors of the future. 'There is an argument that speculation has turned off people who might have been great patrons, because they thought it was all about loving art and artists,' he says. The irony is that guarantees only affect the very top of the market. According to Gore, only 1.5 per cent of lots at Christie's carry guarantees – although because of the high price of each work, that represents much more by value.

Maybe the tension arises because of the image auction houses have cultivated, more Joseph Duveen than Del Boy. They trade on their own antiquity, their aristocratic connections and their expertise in all kinds of art. Guarantees come from a world of quasi-financial institutions. Look too closely and they remind us that our major auction houses are not so much temples to art but to Mammon.

Jane Morris is an independent writer, editor and commentator.

Photo: Lauridsen Carsten/Ritzau via Alamy; courtesy Christie's

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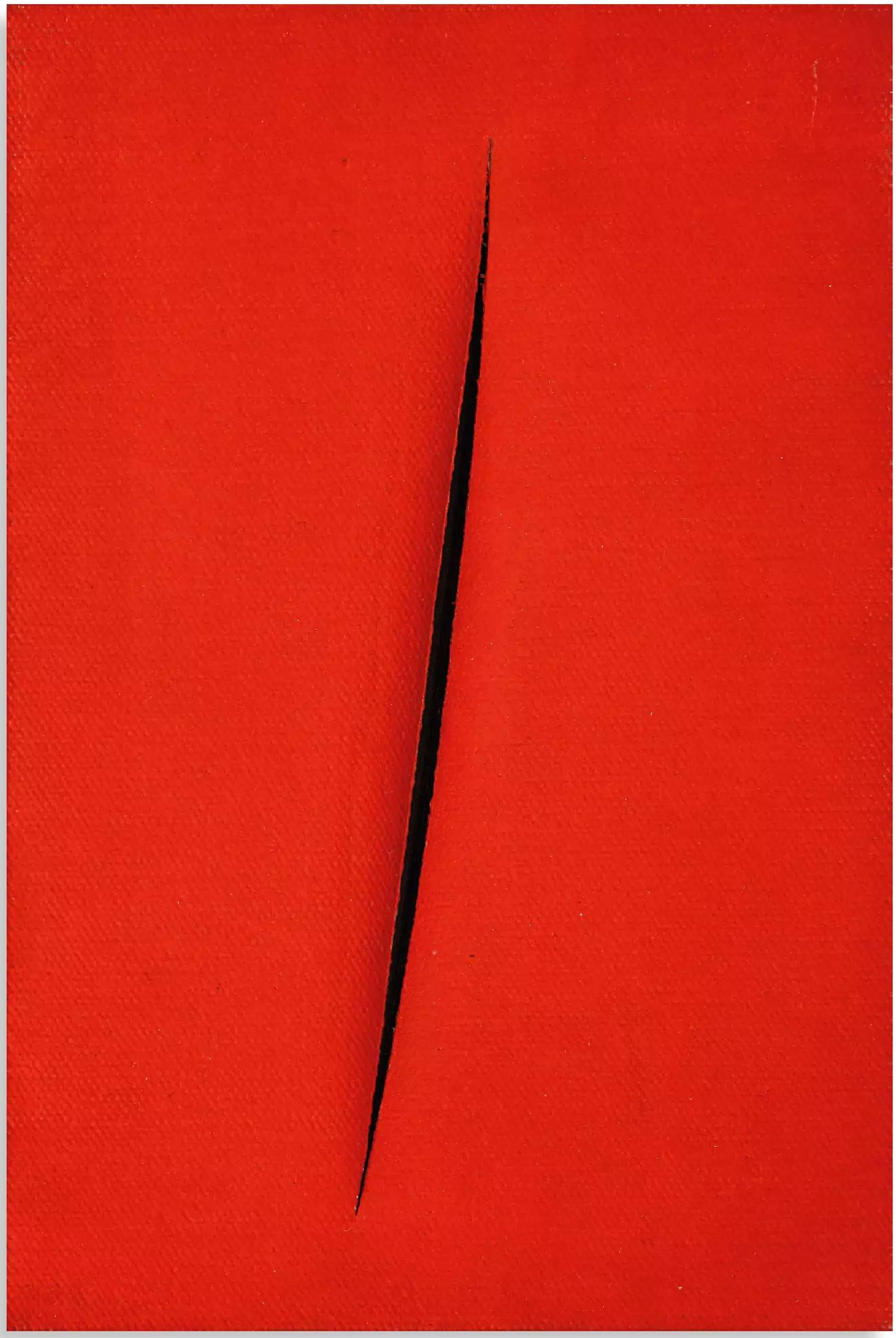

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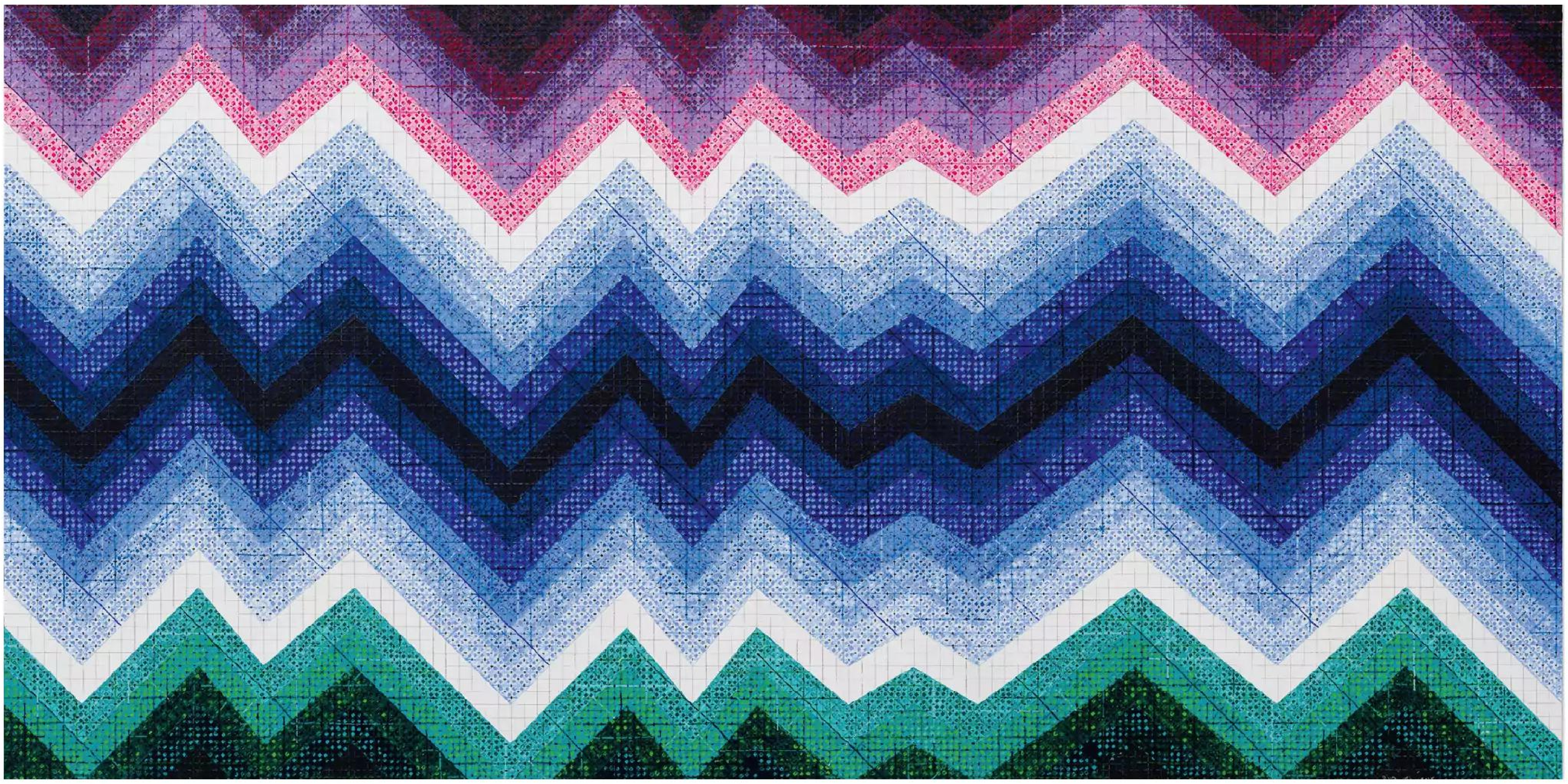


Appearance of Crosses 2025 – 8, 2025, Ding Yi (b. 1962), acrylic, pencil and woodcuts on basswood, 120 × 240cm. Lisson Gallery (price on application)

Courtesy Lisson Gallery; © the artist

The market for work by late 20th-century and contemporary Chinese artists keeps throwing up surprises, writes **EMMA CRICHTON-MILLER**

On the morning of 27 September 1979, a group of non-professional, mostly self-taught Chinese artists set up an exhibition outside the National Art Museum of China in Beijing. Oil paintings, ink paintings, woodcuts and wood carvings were hung on fences and in trees. Huang Rui, Ma Desheng, Li Shuang, Bo Yun, Wang Keping, Yan Li, Yang Yiping and Ai Weiwei were among the 23 artists of what became known as the Stars Art Group or *Xing Xing*. It was closed by the authorities after three days but, following a large protest, reopened in November for another 10 days.

This was a significant moment for Chinese contemporary art – the birth of an avant-garde after Mao's death and in the dawn of Deng Xiaoping's era of 'reform and opening up'. In 1980, a second Stars exhibition opened inside the museum. Far from socialist realist art, 'serving the masses of the people', as advocated by Mao, this work expressed personal visions and private anguish. By 1983, as political pressure mounted, the leading figures of the Stars Group were in exile. The '85 New Art Movement brought together a second wave of artists, including Chen Zhen, Ding Yi, Liu Zhenggang, Wang Guangyi, Xu Bing, Yu Youhan and Zhang Xiaogang. Pursuing narrative painting, abstraction, conceptual art, installation and performance, they were influenced by traditional training as well as new access to Western art. The Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989 drove many into exile or underground. During the 1990s new groupings formed – the artists of 'Political Pop' (including Wang Guangyi, Yu Youhan, Li Shen and Liu Dahong), the younger leaders of the satirical school of 'cynical realism', Yue Minjun, Fang Lijun, and Liu Wei, and others such as Liu Xiaodong and Zeng Fanzhi.

Two Hong Kong gallerists pioneered the market in Chinese contemporary artists: Johnson Chang at dealership Hanart TZ, founded in 1983, and Swiss-born Manfred Schoeni, who opened his gallery in 1992 with an exhibition of Liu Dahong, following up in 1994 with a two-man show by Yang Shaobin and Yue Minjun. Nicole Schoeni of Schoeni Art Projects says, 'My father believed in backing artists wholeheartedly – sometimes buying entire bodies of work – so they had the freedom to create without compromise.' They sold to Westerners based in Hong Kong and mainland China, chief among them the Swiss ambassador Uli Sigg, and Guy and Myriam Ullens. In 1994 Chang introduced Chinese contemporary artists to the 22nd São Paulo Biennial, and in 1995 to the Venice Biennale. Schoeni was involved in exhibitions such as 'China!' at the Kunstmuseum Bonn (1996) that took these artists to wider global audiences. In 1996 the auction house Zhong Shang Sheng Jia organised the first sale within China dedicated to Chinese contemporary art. At that point there was little domestic interest, but many artists had established multinational collector bases, with international gallery support, enabling them to create substantial bodies of work.

In October 2004 Sotheby's Hong Kong sparked what became an explosive market with a first auction dedicated to Contemporary Chinese Art. By 2006 Sotheby's was selling works by some of these artists in evening sales in New York and London. Prices rose dramatically. In October 2007, Yue Minjun's politically charged painting *The Execution* (1995) sold at Sotheby's London for £2.9m (estimate £1.5m–£2m)

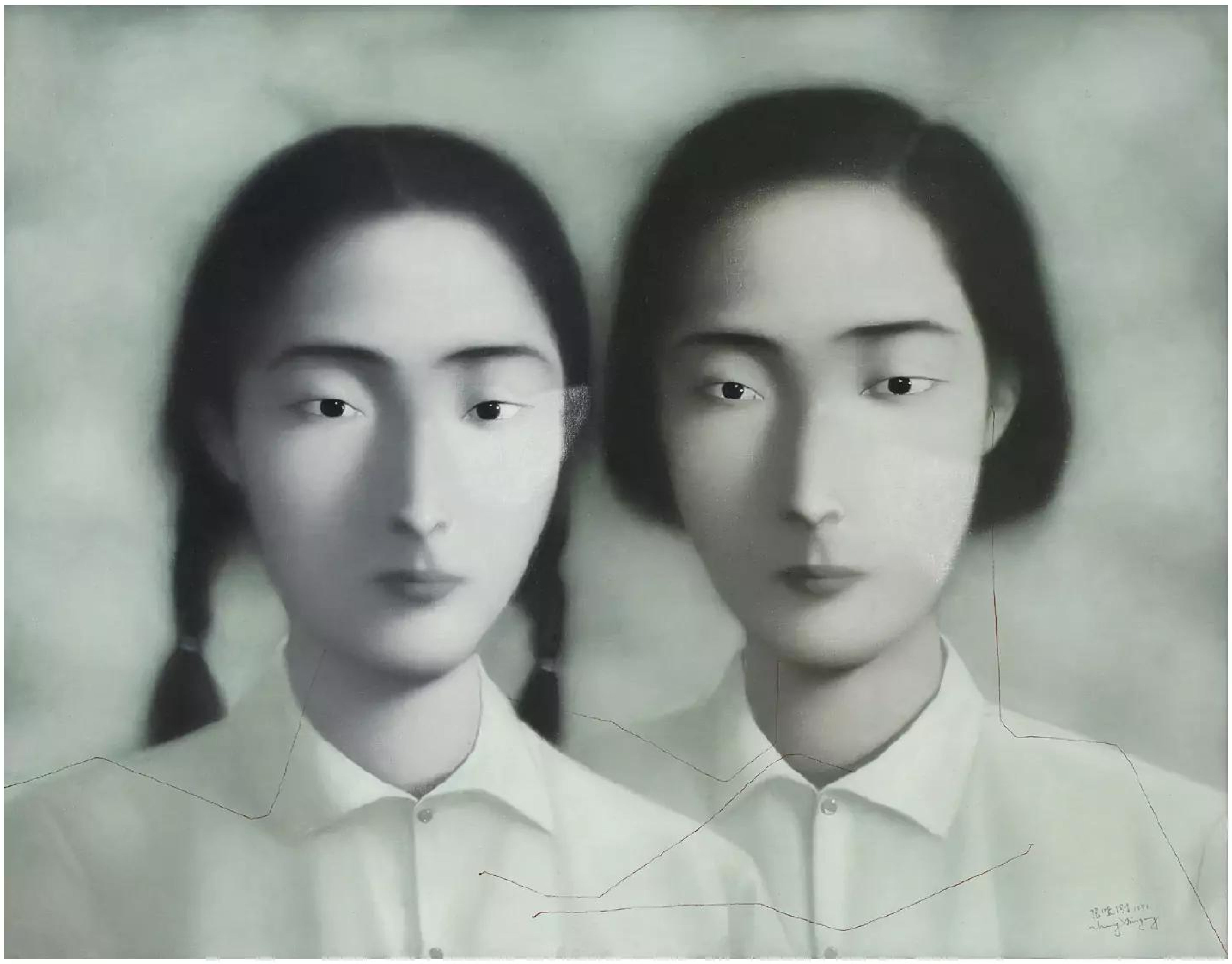
– then a record for contemporary Chinese art. Early enthusiasts saw their holdings appreciate significantly, encouraging more works on to the market. In China in November 2006, Poly Auction sold Liu Xiaodong's oil painting *New Settlers at the Three Gorges* (2004) for RMB22m (US$2.7m), more than twice its estimate.

The global financial crisis of 2008 knocked the wind out of the international market, with a further downturn inside China after 2012. But as Alex Branczik, Sotheby's Chairman and Head of Modern and Contemporary Art, EMEA & Asia, London, says, 'A lot of records were still made after 2008.' Growth slowed, but was sustained globally by 'some of our top collectors, looking for the best of the best'. In October 2013 Sotheby's Hong Kong's 40th anniversary sale saw a new record for a living Chinese artist – HK$180.4m (US$23.3m) for Zeng Fanzhi's *The Last Supper* (2001). Ai Weiwei's auction record was set in 2015 at Phillips London when a bronze set of *Circle of Animals / Zodiac Heads* was knocked down for £3.4m (estimate £3m–£5m). Major works by the big names at auction – Zeng Fanzhi, Zhang Xiaogang, Yu Youhan, Liu Xiaodong, Liu Wei and Liu Ye – found their way into institutional and major private collections. Chinese buyers, who entered the market in the early 2000s, now dominate, Nicole Schoeni says, 'though Western collectors remain quietly committed'. She adds, 'Artists such as Ai Weiwei, Cai Guo-Qiang, Liu Wei, Liu Xiaodong, Xu Bing, Yue Minjun, Zeng Fanzhi, and Zhang Xiaogang continue to be highly sought after.' Branczik notes, though, that for the last five years Asian buyers have been showing strong interest in Western rather than Chinese contemporary art. Meanwhile, a dearth of quality works coming to auction has depressed prices. Sotheby's Hong Kong has been testing the water with two major works – Zeng Fanzhi's *Society no. 3 (Mask Series 2001 no 3)* (2001), estimated HK$14–24m, and Zhang Xiaogang's *Bloodline – Big Family No. 7: Siblings* (1996), which at time of writing is expected to fetch HK$4m–$6m. 'The market,' Branczik says, 'needs reassurance that these works have value.'

This autumn brings other stimuli. Hong Kong-based 3812 Gallery is opening a space in Whiteley's, London, on 15 October with a solo show of work by Ma Desheng. This will focus on works inspired by the female form – a subject he first took on in the early 1980s, when he made the transition from woodcut to ink painting. According to Calvin Hui, co-founder of the gallery, Ma's rare early ink works are highly prized – a female figure in ink from 1988 sold for HK$492,000, against an estimate of HK$30,000–HK$50,000, at China Guardian Hong Kong earlier this year.

Lisson Gallery, whose stable includes Ai Weiwei and Liu Xiaodong, opened its first solo presentation in London of works by Ding Yi in September. Curatorial director Greg Hilty notes the focus on this generation of artists by the Tate, the Met, the Guggenheim and the Pompidou – while Liu Xiaodong had a solo show, 'Borders', at Dallas Contemporary in 2021. He also points to recent rapid growth of audiences in the large Chinese diaspora. Shanghai-based Ding Yi is, he says, 'hugely successful and revered in China'. Hilty believes that his current work – 'with its conceptual grounding and abstract craftsmanship' – reaches out beyond the local context, and that recent shows in Wales, France and Switzerland suggest this is 'a very good time to bring him on to the international stage'.

Meanwhile, White Cube has just opened Cai Guo-Qiang's first solo show in London for 20 years, 'Cai Guo-Qiang: Gunpowder and Abstraction 2015–2025'. A spokesperson says: 'Ahead of Cai's London exhibition, we've already seen strong sales of his work at Art Basel, where we placed three major paintings on our booth: *Red Birds* (2022), which sold to a European fine art institution for $1.2m, alongside *Trish's Peony No. 2* (2023) and *Natural Poppy Flower* (2016), each acquired for $700,000.' At Art Basel Paris the gallery is also showing work he has created in collaboration with his self-developed AI model. The avant-garde is still evolving.



Bloodline – Big Family No. 7: Siblings, 1996, Zhang Xiagang (b. 1958), oil on canvas, 100 × 130cm. Sotheby's Hong Kong (estimate HK$4m–$6m)

Courtesy Sotheby's; © the artist

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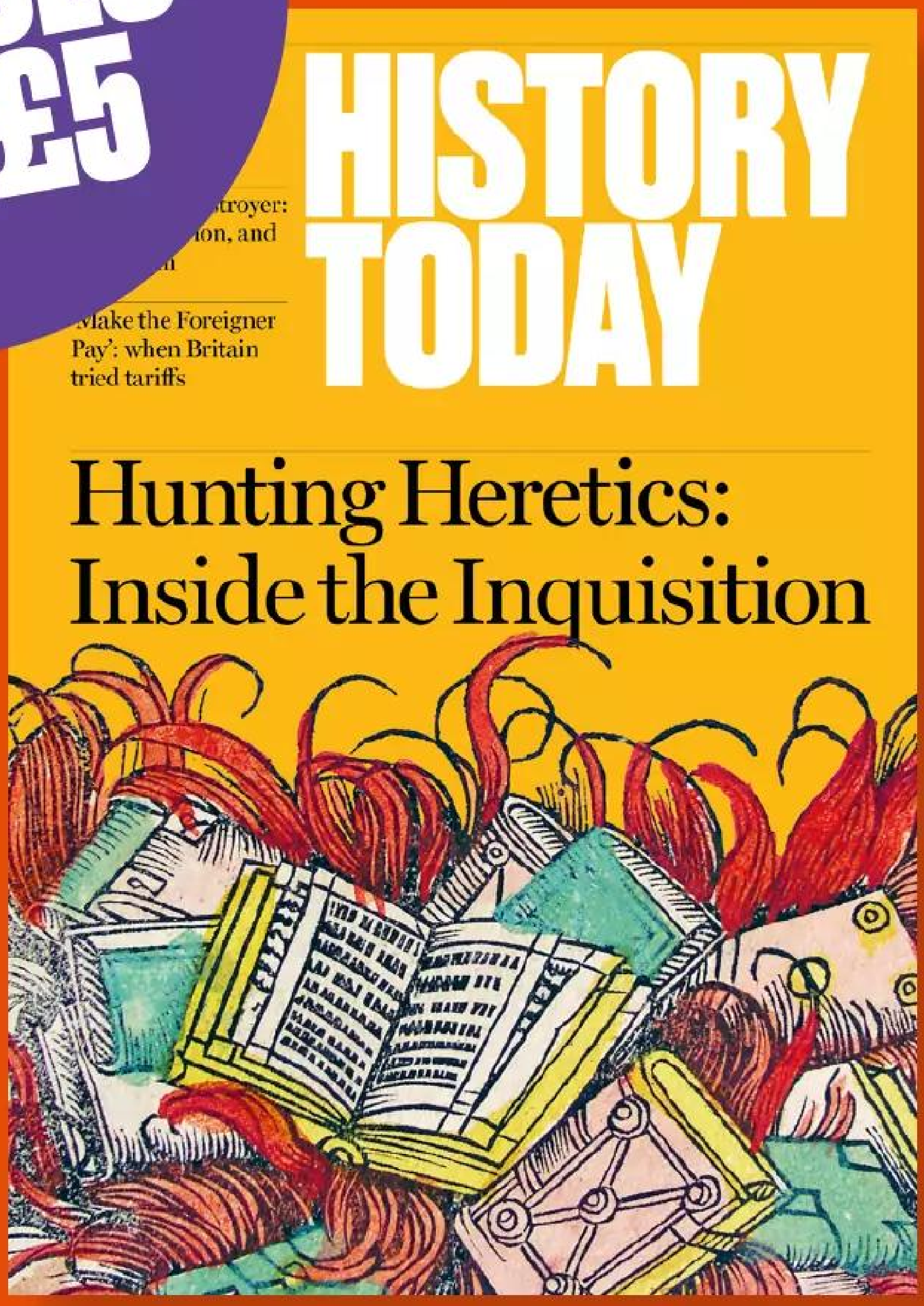
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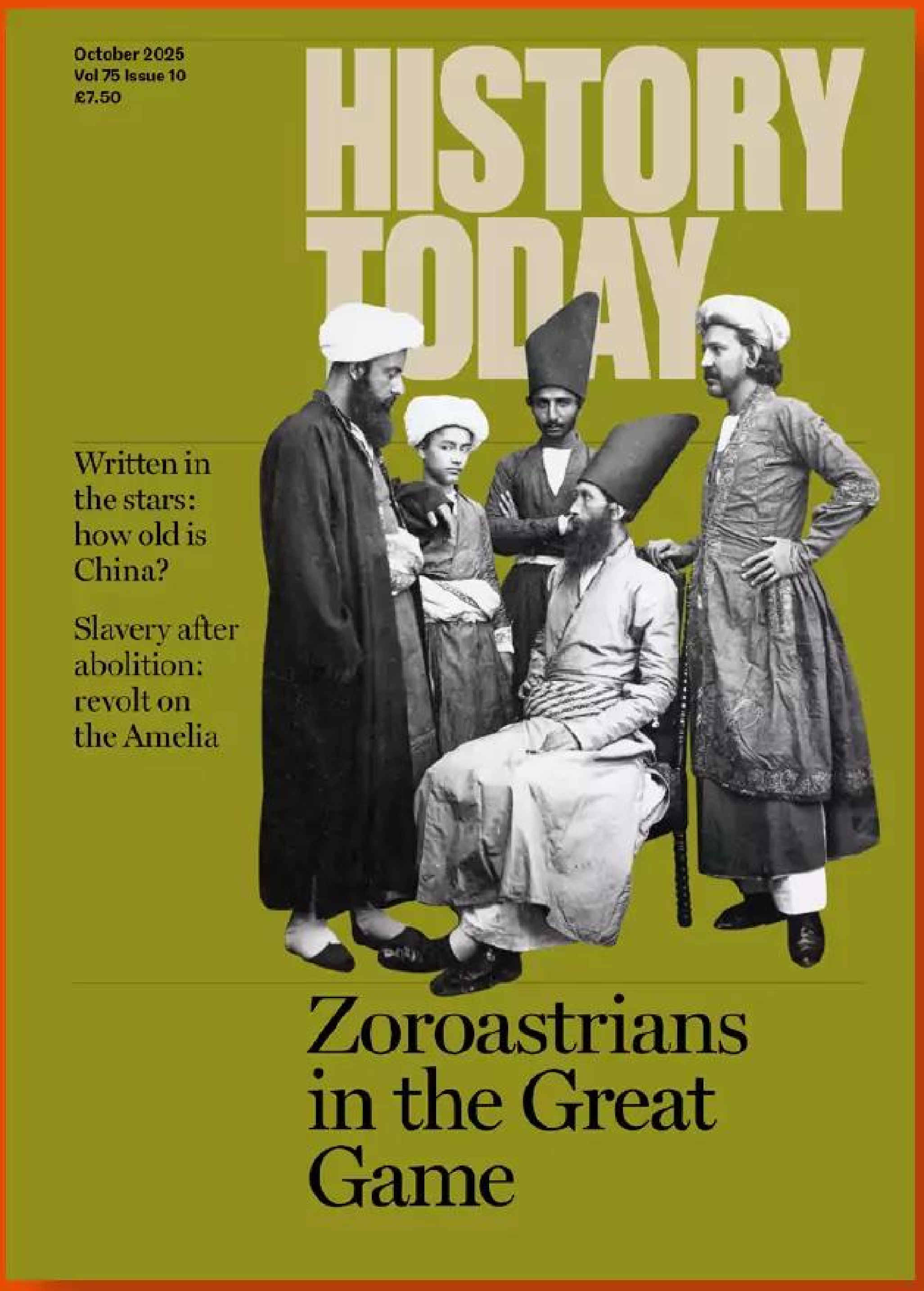
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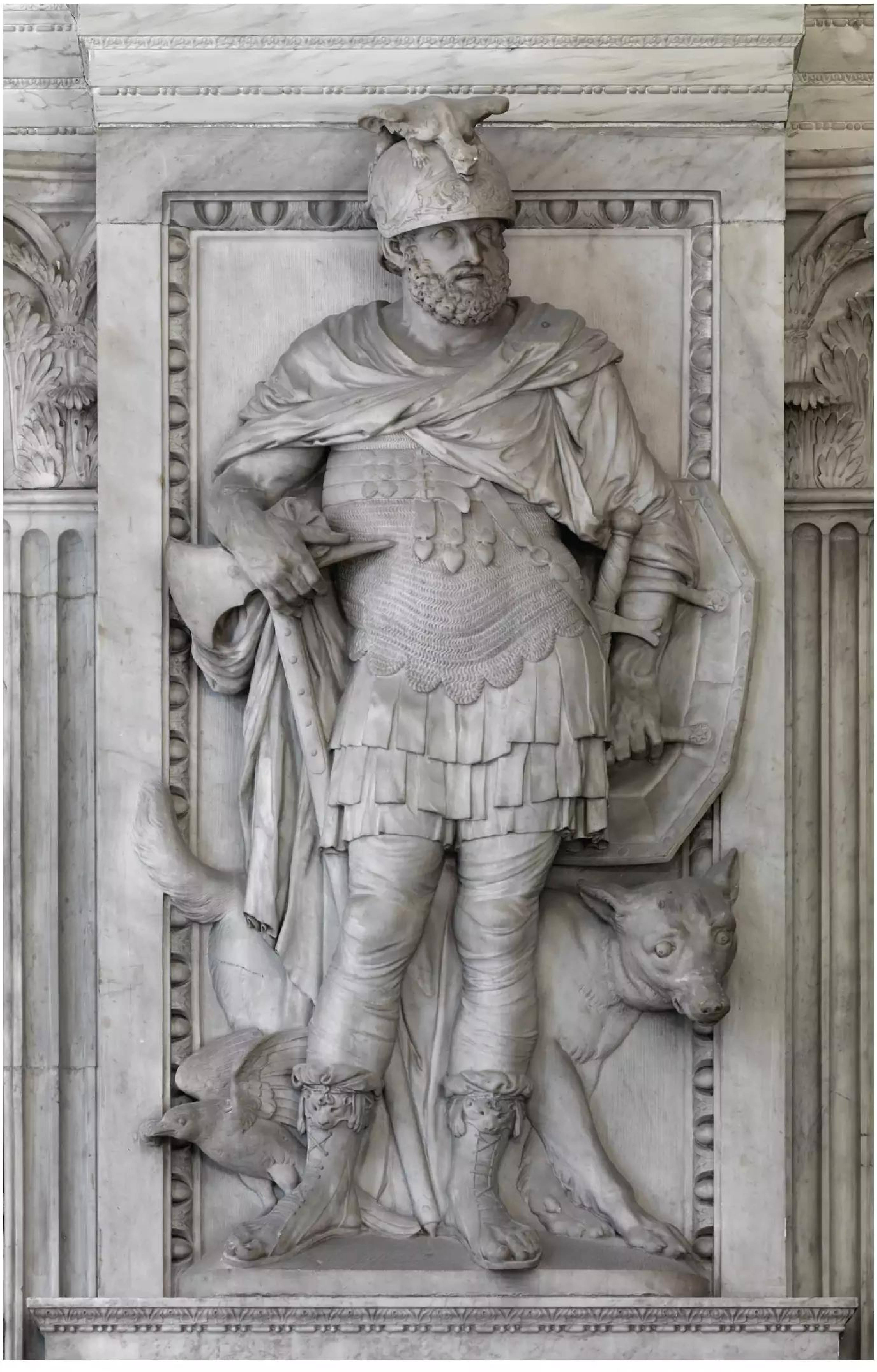
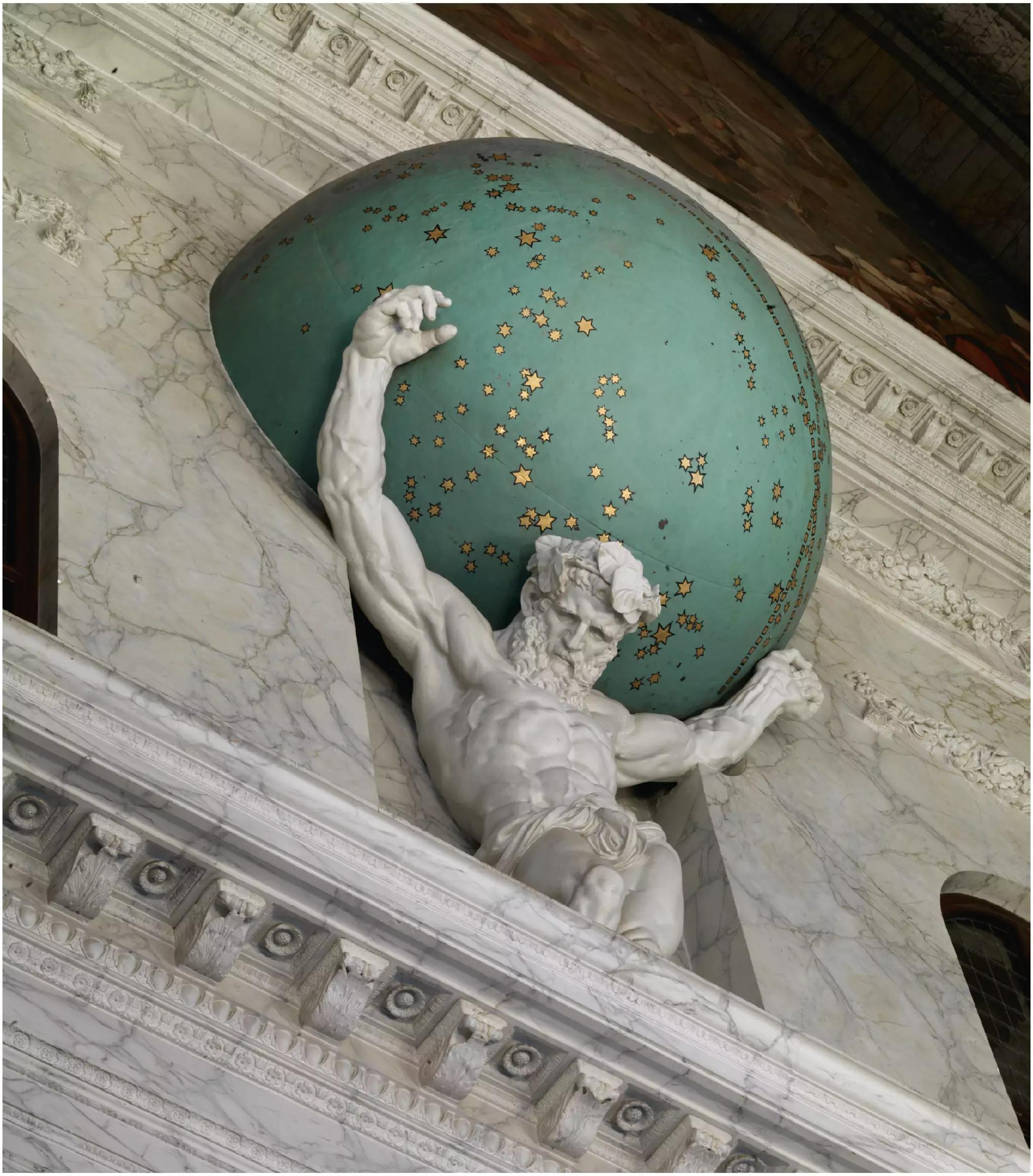
REVIEWS

EXHIBITIONS AMSTERDAM'S SCULPTOR-IN-CHIEF, THE DARK ART OF PIERRE SOULAGES, THE EXPERIMENTAL FILMS OF STAN DOUGLAS **BOOKS** A MADCAP HISTORY OF COLLECTING, AND A PIONEERING PAINTER OF THE PORTUGESE BAROQUE



Mars, *c.* 1653–54, Artus Quellinus (1609–68), marble, 189 × 107cm. Royal Palace Amsterdam

Photo: Tom Haartsen/Royal Palace Amsterdam



Atlas, *c.* 1662–63, Artus Quellinus (1609–68), Avesnes stone with white paint, ht 700cm. Citizens' Hall, Royal Palace Amsterdam

Photo: Royal Palace Amsterdam/Tom Haartsen

REVIEW

Chiselled features

Artus Quellinus – Sculptor of Amsterdam
18 June–27 October 2025
Royal Palace, Amsterdam

The greatest Flemish sculptor of the baroque finally receives his due, and in the perfect setting, writes **ANTONIA BOSTRÖM**

It is a happy and rare occasion when an exhibition can be mounted in the heart of an artist's masterpiece. Such is the case for the monographic exhibition on the Flemish sculptor Artus Quellinus (1609–68), a collaboration between Royal Palace Amsterdam and the Rijksmuseum, marking the 750th anniversary of the founding of Amsterdam, which has been arranged in the former town hall (now the Royal Palace) on the Dam Square in the city. The new republic's prestigious civic space, for which the Antwerp-born Quellinus created sculptural decoration, became one of Europe's most renowned marble interiors. Though less well-known than his Italian counterpart Bernini, Quellinus is considered the greatest sculptor of the Flemish and Dutch baroque, and this magnificent exhibition confirms his status.

Having trained under his father, Erasmus Quellinus, Artus developed his early career through contact with the circle of Flemish sculptors, including Lucas Faydherbe, who operated in the shadow of Peter Paul Rubens. A study trip to Rome from 1634 to 1639 brought him into close contact with another fellow Fleming, François du Quesnoy; at the same time he immersed himself in the sculpture of ancient Rome, as well as the work of Bernini, Algardi and Finelli. These influences coalesced in a classicising style inflected by a capacity to convey complex emotions, to capture the sinuous lines of heavy drapery and to evoke the softness of flesh, that echoes the paintings of Rubens, his mentor and supporter in Antwerp – a handful of Rubens's paintings are included in the exhibition to underscore this important stylistic link. Before Quellinus's move to Amsterdam to undertake the town hall commission, Queen Christina of Sweden had unsuccessfully tried to engage him as court sculptor in Stockholm, and he may also have worked in Lyon. In 1665 he returned to Antwerp, where his most renowned late work is a portrait bust of the governor general of the southern Netherlands, Luis de Benavides, Marquis of Caracena.

Between 1650 and 1665, working closely with the architect Jacob van Campen, Quellinus and his highly skilled workshop created in Amsterdam's massive town hall a sculptural *Gesamtkunstwerk* of unmatched variety, invention and bravura. The pediments, walls and niches of the Citizens' Hall and the flanking galleries are adorned with monumental and relief sculpture depicting the planets, the sun and moon and the four elements. These are framed by elaborate festoons, the descendants of ancient and Renaissance garlands and the ancestors of Grinling Gibbons' wooden carvings. Facing the viewer across the hall is the seated *City Maiden of Amsterdam* (*c.* 1663–66), the world literally at her feet in the form of three marble terrestrial and celestial globes inlaid into the stone floor (the astrological globe is so worn by generations of burghers' feet that only Scorpio's claws remain visible). Above her, *Atlas* (*c.* 1662–63) bears the globe on his massive shoulders. As one of Europe's most powerful trading nations, Holland saw itself as the centre of the universe and this magnificent space was intended to signal the young republic's status and its independence from the Catholic Southern Netherlands. The city fathers could not have found a more suitable sculptor than Quellinus to manifest those intentions.

The exhibition examines Quellinus's greatest masterpiece *in situ* and thematic groupings in the galleries off the central hall help to expand our knowledge of this commission and of his career. The importance of this exhibition is underlined by a number of showstopper loans, such as the *Saint Peter* (*c.* 1659) from the church of St Andrew's in Antwerp or the monumental *Fountain of Pallas Athena* (1659–60) from Cleves, seen for the first time outside their original locations.

Visual connections are made between the preparatory terracotta models and the final marble sculptures, allowing the viewer to see how the spontaneity of a clay *bozzetto* has been maintained in the final sculpture, thanks to Quellinus's skill at suggesting texture, movement and expression even in the intractable medium of marble. His images of mischievous putti in terracotta, ivory and marble are the heirs of those made popular by du Quesnoy, while tender animal sculptures reflect the Flemish enthusiasm for this genre. The town hall project became, in effect, the training ground for the next generation of Dutch and Flemish sculptors, and the exhibition and admirable accompanying catalogue devote considerable space to examining the work of Quellinus's most important assistants: Bartholomeus Eggers, Rombout Verhulst and Josse de Corte. Moreover, the graphic legacy of the town hall, illustrated through a series of prints created by Artus's brother Hubertus Quellinus, helped to disseminate his sculptural and decorative language across Europe. Surely the sculptural decoration of the great halls at Houghton, Castle Howard or Wentworth Woodhouse follows Quellinus's exemplar, channelled through the subsequent generation of Flemish sculptors, such as Rysbrack and Scheemakers, who settled in Britain.

Finally, an honour guard of burgomasters' portrait busts flanks the central Citizens' Hall. Here Quellinus's *Bust of Andries de Graeff* (1661) reigns supreme in its evocation of Bernini's 'speaking likeness', the Finelli-like skill in evoking drapery and lace, and the energetic drill work of the wig.

Returning downstairs to the Dam Square, the visitor will pass the Tribunal, where some of Quellinus's most affecting sculpture can be seen. Mourning caryatids, plaited hair merging with the architecture, hide their faces in shame and despair. Sculpted tableaux depict heroic biblical and classical scenes as moral exemplars for those on trial, while images of death populate the decorative friezes. The newly cleaned and regilded exterior pediment facing the Dam Square is surmounted by six massive bronze figures similarly recently restored to their rich dark patinas. The contrast between the sober Dam Square and the stupendous baroque interior decoration of the town hall contributes to the heightened sense of theatre that makes this formerly republican civic space so appropriate for the pomp and pageantry of royal occasions.

Catalogue by Bieke van der Mark,
Frits Scholten and Alice Taatgen
ISBN 9789462089129, £36/€35
(Nai010 Publishers)

Antonia Boström is a sculpture historian and curator.

REVIEW

Master of the dark arts

Pierre Soulages: La rencontre
28 June–4 January 2026
Musée Fabre, Montpellier

In his virtuosic variations on the colour black, Pierre Soulages achieved a surprising degree of variety, writes **ROD MENGHAM**

Pierre Soulages (1919–2022) was a prolific artist whose work could fill a significant number of museums (there are some 500 paintings alone in the Musée Soulages, founded in 2014 in Rodez, southern France, where the artist was born). The Musée Fabre in Montpellier has a modest 20, but many of them are large and they are currently bulked out with loans from several other galleries for the exhibition 'La rencontre'. It's a meeting – or a reunion – of Soulages paintings, nearly all of which are dominated by the (non-) colour black. Montpellier lies within sight of the Mediterranean coast and has more claim to the title 'City of Light' than Paris itself, so it might seem perverse to choose this location to display all these tableaux of darkness. But in fact, the glossy black used in the paintings captures and reflects the light – and Soulages was more practised than anyone else in presenting an entire spectrum of black, ranging from dust-dull to slick.

The earliest paintings here dramatise the exclusion of light. *Goudron sur verre* ('Tar on glass') is the title shared by two works from 1948. Both consist of broken shards of glass over which swipes of black paint have been forcefully applied. In *Encre sur papier* (1949) background light seems to enter the painting from behind a pair of shutters that have partly disintegrated. For Soulages, the view from and of an obscure interior is more interesting than whatever lies outside. He wants to remain in the dark.

The shards of glass and shutter-like forms merely imply the arrangements of a domestic interior, just as the stacks of thick bar-like forms that begin to gather in the paintings of 1959 and 1960 are not representations of, but allusions to, the groups of menhirs that characterise the monumental architecture of French prehistory. The top half of *Peinture 162 × 130 cm, 2 novembre 1959* resembles a row of leaning, perhaps even toppling, menhirs, while the bottom half gathers together a set of similar forms in both vertical and horizontal arrangements. Ten years later, in *Peinture 202 × 327 cm, 17 Janvier 1970*, Soulages appears to be monumentalising a simple set of palings, with seven verticals and a single segmented horizontal. This arrangement also recalls the bars of a cage, which raises the question: on which side of the bars do the viewers find themselves? At the end of the same year, in *Peinture 200 × 285 cm, 12 décembre 1970*, an almost equally large format is used to contain what looks like a megalith consisting of dislocated barriers and arches. This counterpointing of the domestic and the megalithic provides a context for Soulages's titles, which recall diary entries. Individual human scales of significance are placed in relation to much larger temporal rhythms. Houses are containers that may admit, or exclude, natural light on a diurnal and seasonal basis. The monumental architecture of the Neolithic period, on the other hand, tracks the cycles and relations of celestial light sources over generations, as well as the more frequent, seasonal shifts between light and dark.

There is a risk in many of these paintings of reading their chromatic statements as readings of light levels. But Soulages's own method of using titles to register the time of composition makes it inevitable that we think of each work as a carefully calibrated response to the particular circumstances of its making. Some works seem to revel in the drama of a moment, while others might be responding to a long-drawn out process. The early work *Peinture 81 × 60 cm, 28 novembre 1955* is placed near the much later *Peinture 130 × 92 cm, 24 juillet 2011*. Both paintings are in portrait format; the earlier work resembles a small window opening that has been barricaded by a patchwork of vertical and horizontal tile-shapes, leaving just one gap sufficient to allow what is perhaps a yellowish candle light to glow through. This peephole effect almost begrudges the admission of light in a painting whose every brushstroke seems intended to mount a barrier against it.

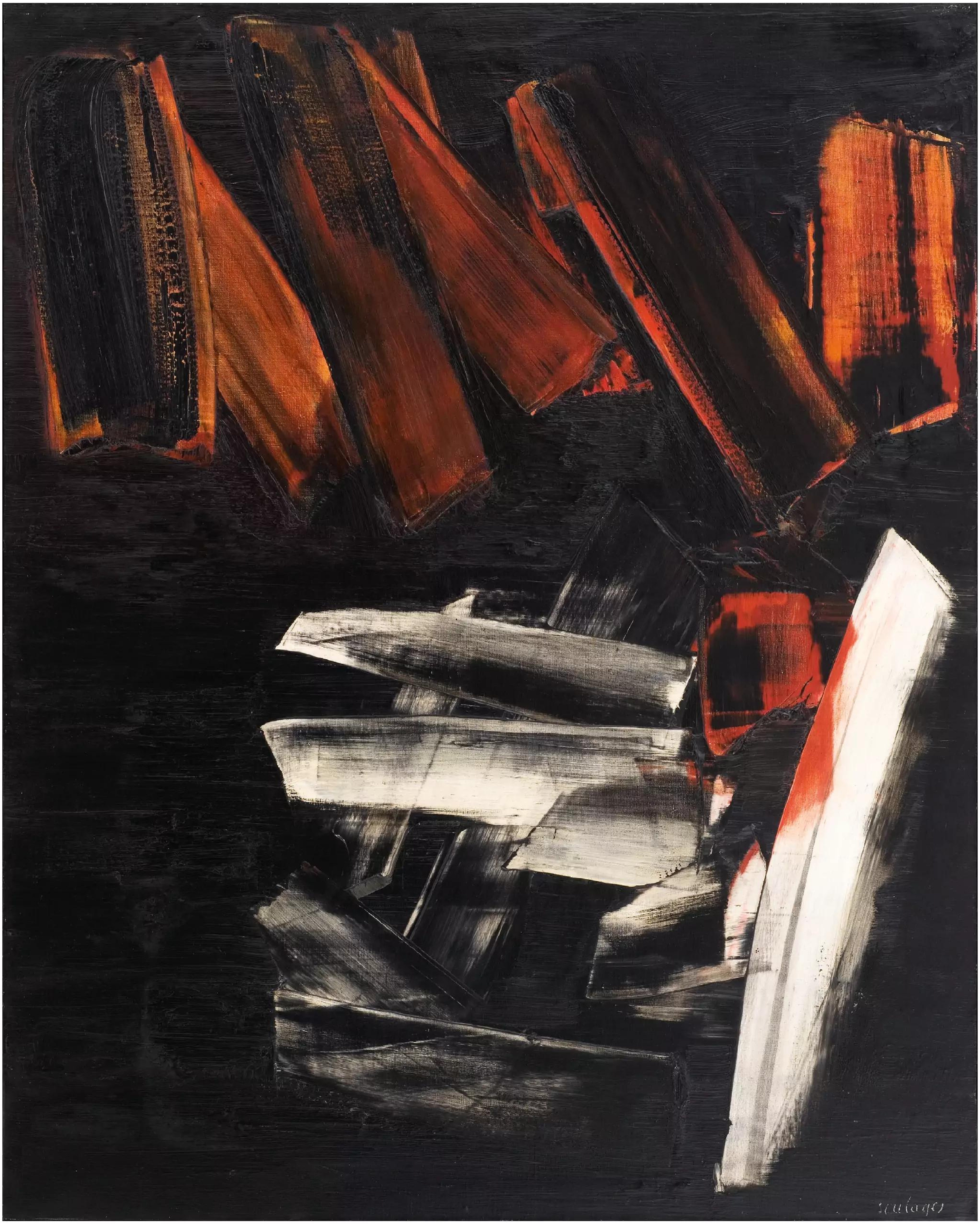
The later work offers a dramatic counterpoint more than half a century later. It presents a series of brick-like elements wedged together horizontally, with gaps opening up everywhere to allow the light to seep through, hazily towards the top, radiantly towards the bottom. The viewer is brought up close to this porous barrier, which both screens and transmits what feels like a pivotal moment in the dying of the light. It is a wonder that Soulages should spend a lifetime painting the same phenomena, converting these natural conditions into abstract forms – and not just tirelessly but in ways that genuinely reinvigorate the project.

A cursory examination of the works of Soulages might make him seem like the kind of character Italo Calvino could have dreamt up – the man who spent his entire life trying to paint the same painting over and over again – but this exhibition, when approached with careful and patient attention, reveals him to be a scrupulous observer of the *clair-obscur*, for whom any shift in the balance of light and dark is enough to trigger an unprecedented new work.

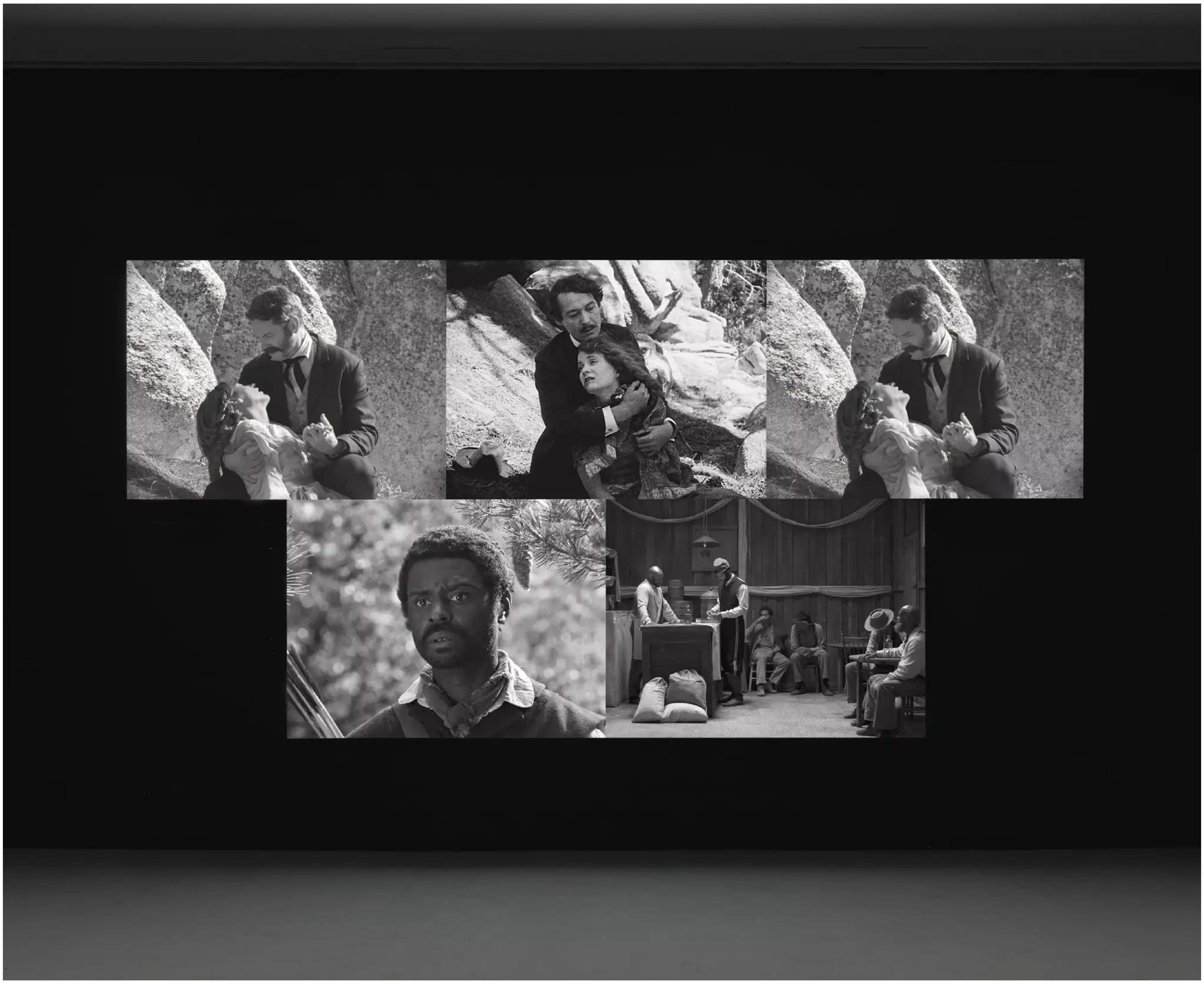
Catalogue by Benoît Decron, Chiara Di Stefano, Pauline Hélou-de La Grandière, Michel Hilaire, Antje Kramer-Mallordy and Maud Marron-Wojewodzki
ISBN 9789461619747 (hardback), €39
(Éditions Snoeck)

Rod Mengham is a professor of English literature and a fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge. His most recent book is Midnight in the Kant Hotel: Art in Present Times *(Carcanet).*

Photo: Frédéric Jaulmes; © Musée Fabre de Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole; © Adagp, Paris, 2025



Peinture 162 × 130 cm, 2 novembre 1959, 1959, Pierre Soulages (1919–2022), oil on canvas, 162×130cm. Musée Fabre, Montpellier



Still from *Birth of a Nation,* 2025, Stan Douglas (b. 1960), five-channel video installation, 13mins 20secs, black-and-white and colour, silent

Courtesy the artist/Victoria Miro/David Zwirner; © the artist

REVIEW

Histories of cinema

Stan Douglas: Ghostlight
Until 30 November
Hessel Museum of Art, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson

This survey shows how the moving image can be made to bridge the gap between past and present, writes **ROBERT RUBSAM**

In *Der Sandmann* (1995) by Stan Douglas, two 16mm projectors display a pair of looping, overlapping scenes: a *Schrebergärten* (allotment) in Potsdam, seen both at its fertile peak and as a despoiled, defoliated wasteland. As the cameras pan circles around the artist's studio, the public garden, once a source of fresh food for working people in the GDR, transforms into private property and then back to common land, as a Black German man named Nathanael relates a story from his childhood about a strange gardener. Like the two panning feeds, his narration both does and does not line up with the story by E.T.A. Hoffmann that gives the piece its name. It generates an effect of convergence and disjuncture at the same time – between a garden which is also a piece of real estate, and a moment of political liberation which might lead, paradoxically, to the death of an entire world.

Der Sandmann is just one piece of 'Ghostlight,' a wide-ranging survey of Douglas's work currently on display at Bard College's Hessel Museum of Art. Spanning photography, digital collage, experimental video and a new five-channel installation riffing on D.W. Griffith's film *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), these works attest to the artist's decades-long interest in divergence: between the past and the present, the seen and the unseen, the world as it is described in official reports and public narratives, and as we experience it – and the possibility, however far-fetched, that one might be transformed, one day, into the other.

Douglas was born and raised in Vancouver, British Columbia, and a number of the works on display allude to the region's history as a junction-point of varied imperial, commercial and social visions. In his photos of the Nootka Sound, Douglas traces the lives and afterlives of the island's logging and quarrying industries, scars upon a landscape Europeans once considered untouched and unpeopled. The *Nu*tka** installation of 1996 is a sonic and visual expression of this disjunction, isolating the audio tracks of Spanish and English explorers on to separate channels, while another pair of images pan past on screen. Where *Der Sandmann* places these feeds side-by-side, *Nu*tka** digitally interlaces these views of the Sound into alternating hair-thin raster lines – one line Feed A, the next Feed B, the third Feed A, the fourth Feed B, from top of screen to bottom. Your eyes struggle to piece together a complete picture from these disjointed images, until suddenly they alight upon an identical view, and the screen comes into focus, and the voices speak in one voice, illustrating neatly how even divergent colonial interests and institutions serve ultimately the same master.

Throughout, Douglas prompts us to question the veracity of what we're seeing, often by revealing what we do not. *Der Sandmann*'s rotating film loops seamlessly and surreally between eras, disorienting the viewer with its lack of cuts. Elsewhere, a twin video feed projects the professional edit of a 1992 free jazz performance on one side of a screen, while the other plays b-roll of the musicians pausing, breathing, blowing the spit out of their slides. A number of large-scale photographs of distinct historical moments reveal themselves as digitally assembled tableaux that blend documentary and staged photography – history reconstructed from memory and imagination.

This approach reaches a kind of apotheosis in the most recent work on show here, Douglas's response to *The Birth of a Nation*, a racist epic that had a formative influence on the early development of Hollywood cinema. A central channel plays one sequence from Griffith's film, in which a young white woman, Flora, is proposed to and then menaced by a freed black Union Army captain named Gus, played by a white man in blackface. When Flora commits suicide, Gus is chased down and arrested by a group of self-deputised Klansmen, who lynch him off-screen.

Douglas breaks this scene out across four other screens, playing out the sequence from a variety of perspectives, from the everyday routines of the Klavern (the local branch of the Ku Klux Klan) to the lives of free Black men, trapped in a south where slavery has recently been defeated, yet white rule remains strong. He is showing us what Griffiths does not: that bigotry is structural, not situational; that it inheres in communities and always carries the likelihood of violence. In the process, he reveals and dissects the manias and delusions undergirding Jim Crow, the seductive, convenient narratives that could transform a romantic suitor into a demonic menace and the lynching of an innocent man into an act of world-historical heroism.

Yet it's not all loss at the Hessel. I was most struck by a small gallery hung with works from Douglas's ongoing *Crowds and Riots* series. Digitally assembled from documentary sources and figures posed in the studio, these tableaux re-stage moments of possibility and of conflict, from race meetings to sports riots, with a focus on political gatherings. From trade-union strikes to the London riots of 2011, which began in the protests against the killing of an unarmed Black man by the police, these photographs demonstrate how easily the shackles of expectation and moderation can slip away, how much power can accrue when people collect themselves, gather together and push back.

These magic actions, as the critic Tobi Haslett calls them, put pressure on the joints between the stated and the actual, revealing in the process how flimsy the established order really is. Not that we can predict what will emerge from that rupture: the effect might be progress, or the restoration of an earlier, worse order. Yet as Douglas illustrates time and again, no result is preordained. Again and again throughout 'Ghostlight', I found myself smack in that decisive moment, when what might be gives over to what is. Whether through recreation, juxtaposition or disjuncture, fixed in a print or recursively projected, Douglas's work makes those possibilities seem possible again, as if the clock has wound back, the film reset. Like *Der Sandmann*'s twin projectors, he holds you on both sides of that moment at the same time, panning and panning, searching for the changeover.

Catalogue by Lauren Cornell, Karen Kelly, Barbara Schroeder (eds.)
ISBN 9781954947184, $45 (CCS Bard and Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art)

Robert Rubsam lives in New York and writes fiction and non-fiction.

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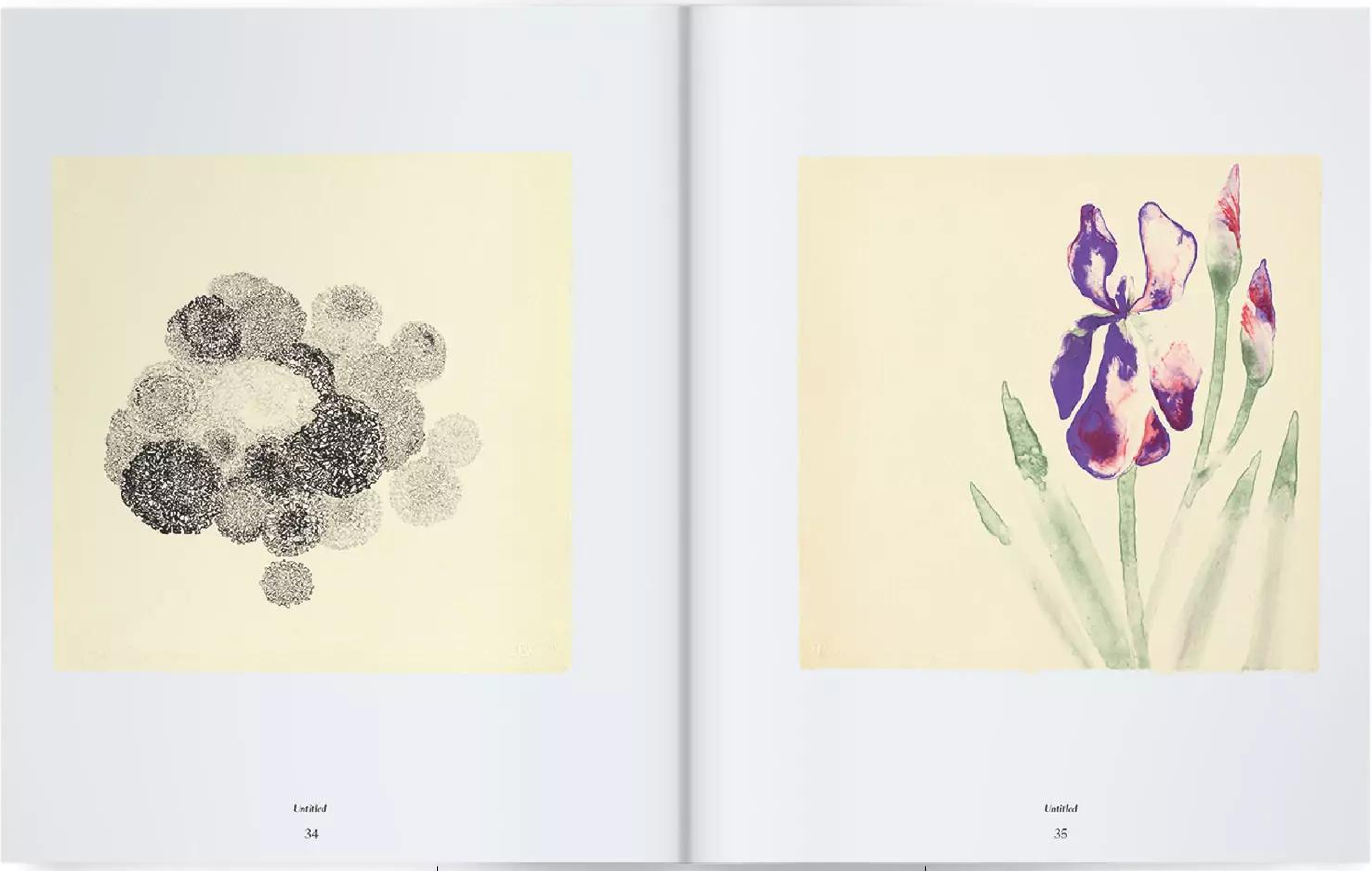
OFF THE SHELF

Apollo's selection of new
books on art, architecture
and the history of collecting

Ruth Asawa:
The Tamarind Prints
Cara Manes and
Dominika Tylcz
Museum of Modern Art, $35
ISBN 9781633451872

In 1965 the American artist, best known for her elegant wire sculptures, embarked on a two-month residency at the Tamarind Lithography Workshop in Los Angeles. The 54 lithographs Asawa produced during her stay – which include delicate depictions of flowers, birds, human faces and household objects such as chairs – are reproduced in full splendour here.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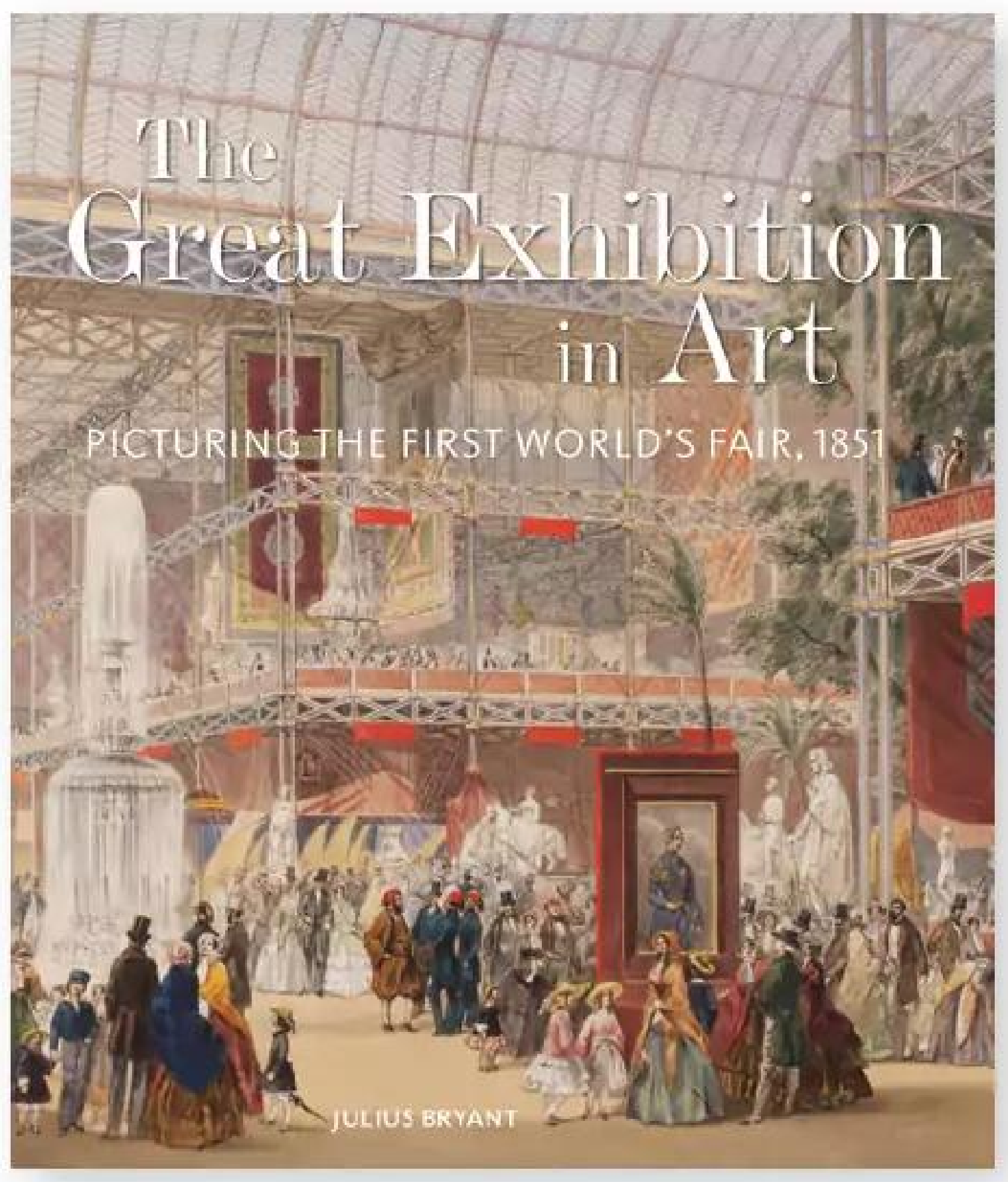
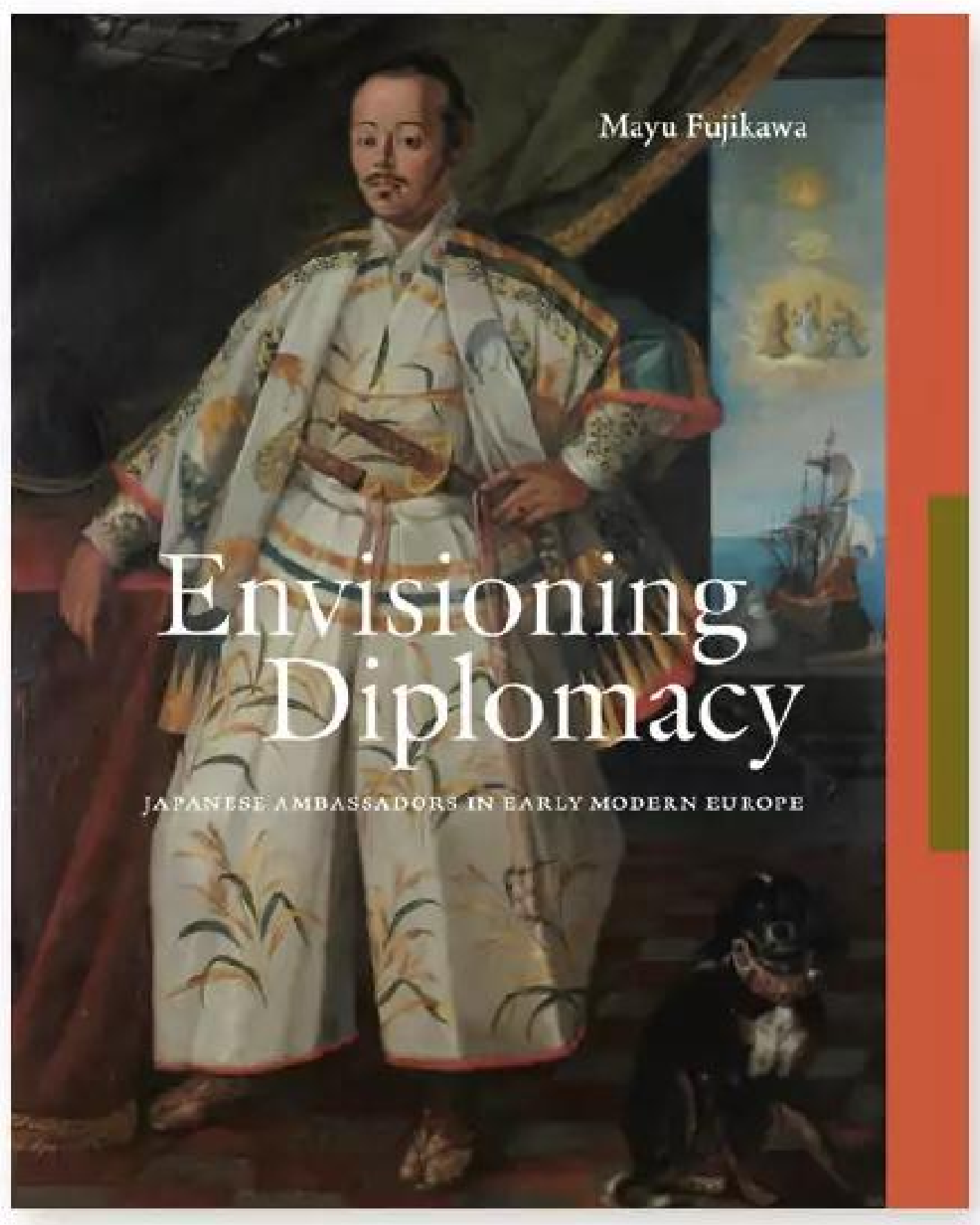

The Great Exhibition in Art
PICTURING THE FIRST WORLD'S FAIR, 1851
JULIUS BRYANT

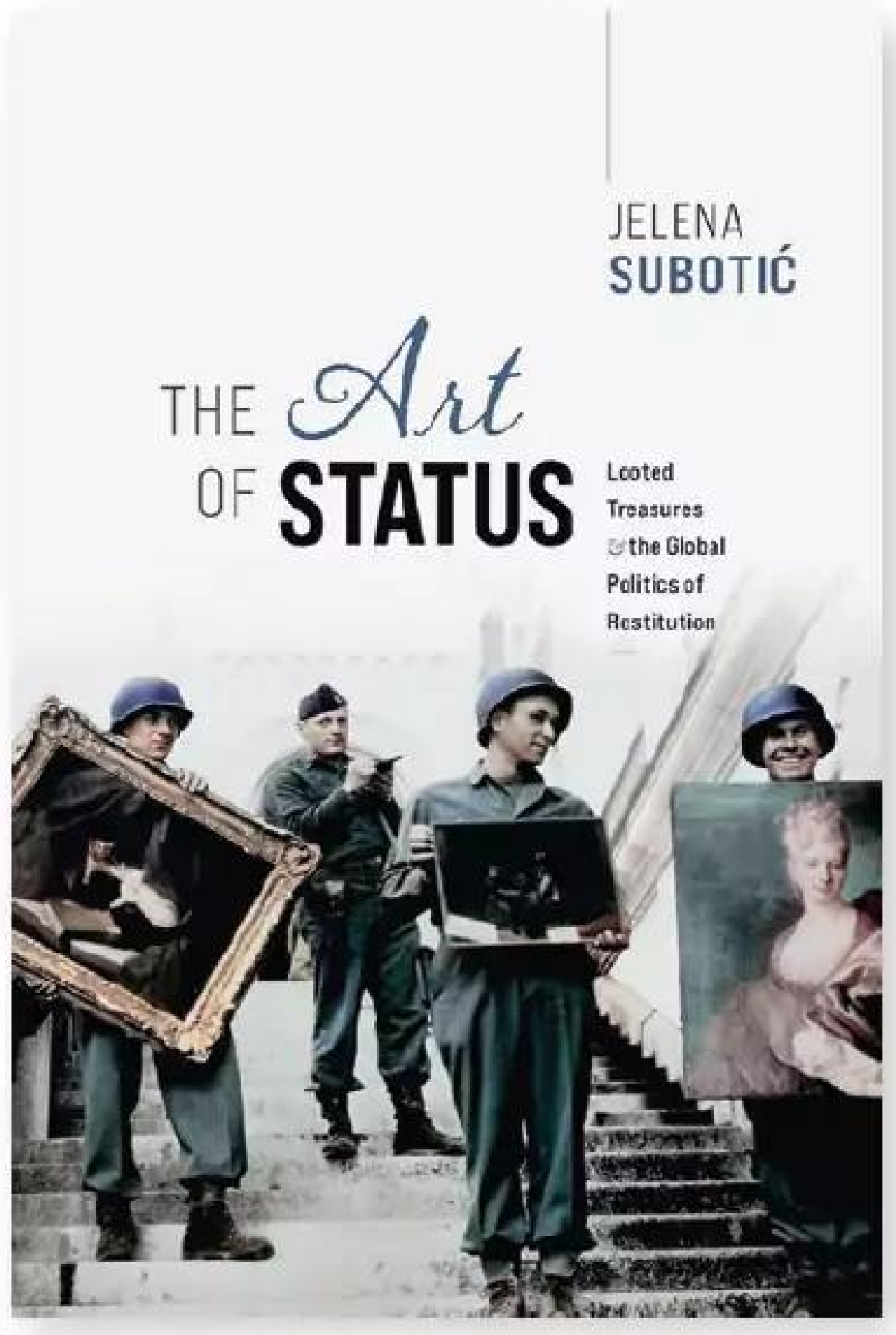
The Great Exhibition in Art: Picturing the First World's Fair, 1851
Julius Bryant
Lund Humphries, £39.95
ISBN 9781848227132

The Great Exhibition is usually seen as a 'trade fair', but it was also a solution to the fact that, when it came to art and design, 'fashionable buyers looked abroad'. Bryant's study looks at the art at the fair and how the event was depicted – many of the images are printed here for the first time since 1851.

Envisioning Diplomacy: Japanese Ambassadors in Early Modern Europe
Mayu Fujikawa
Penn State University Press,
$99.99
ISBN 9780271099255

The first Japanese ambassadors to visit Europe in the late 16th century inspired a host of drawings, prints and paintings by artists from both places. Fujikawa explores what these images reveal about art, religion, diplomacy and cross-cultural exchange at the time.


Mayu Fujikawa
Envisioning Diplomacy
JAPANESE AMBASSADORS IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE

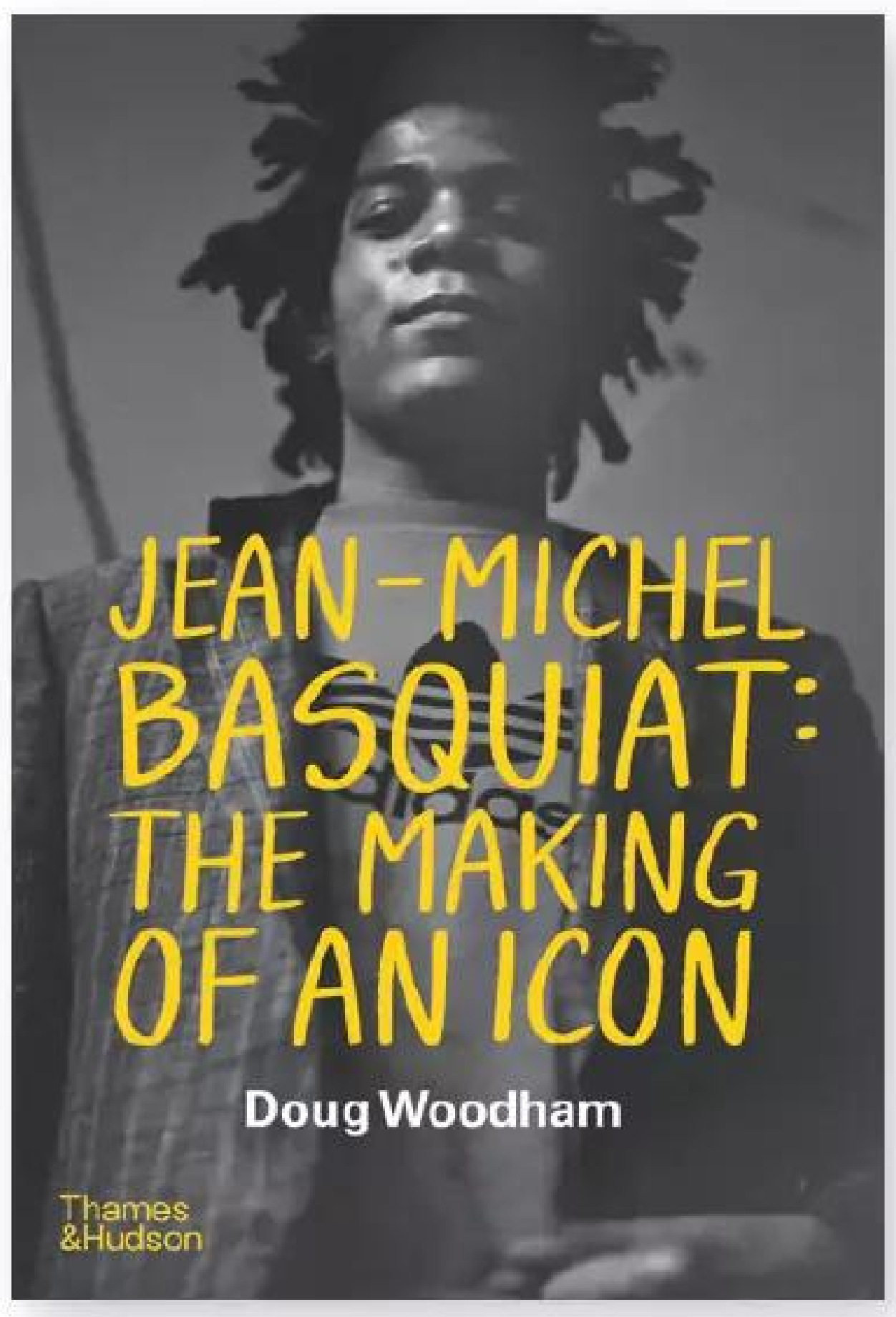

JELENA SUBOTIĆ
THE Art OF STATUS
Looted Treasures and the Global Politics of Restitution

The Art of Status: Looted Treasures and the Global Politics of Restitution
Jelena Subotić
Oxford University Press, £25
ISBN 9780198909750

Subotić, a political scientist, delves into the disputes around the Parthenon Marbles, the Benin Bronzes and more. She argues that restitution – and resistance to it – should be understood in the contexts of states' concerns about their own prestige and soft power.

Jean-Michel Basquiat: The Making of an Icon
Doug Woodham
Thames & Hudson, £30
ISBN 9780500030691

Interviews with family members, gallerists, collectors and more form the backbone of this biography, which argues that Basquiat's 'ascension' to cult status was far from certain. The second half of the book considers why his art has commanded such astronomic prices since his untimely death in 1988.


JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT: THE MAKING OF AN ICON
Doug Woodham
Thames & Hudson

Great accumulators

A Noble Madness: The dark side of collecting
from antiquity to now
James Delbourgo

A sweeping survey of obsessive collecting deals in both reality and fiction, writes **SUSAN MOORE**

Anyone picking up James Delbourgo's book may be forgiven for thinking that this is a book about art. Or the human impulse to surround oneself with beautiful or resonant objects. It is neither of those things. Its purpose, the author tells us, is to explore an enduring cultural idea, namely that collecting is a sign of madness; that there is something peculiar about people who love things too much. To understand how we came to see the collector as a troubled person, he explains, we have to understand how we came to believe that when we look at a collection, we look at a self. It is an intriguing premise for a book.

While not unduly concerned with specific artefacts, Delbourgo does offer 'a grand portrait gallery'. Therein hang sketches of those fanatics, real and fictional, whose excessive acquisitiveness reflects the changing perceptions of the collector over time. Yet the author also plays to the gallery. It is no coincidence that this book opens with Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* and Norman Bates, or recognises that evil has always been more fascinating than good.

Certainly, Cicero found no good (and a great deal of perversion) in Gaius Verres, the governor and plunderer of Sicily in the first century BC. Verres extorted, terrorised and assaulted the island's population and ransacked Greek temples, commanding the fleet to haul his loot – statues, art, gold and silver – back to Rome for a brazen display of luxury in his house. Cicero's description of Verres's *amentiam singularem et furorem* – singular and furious madness – is held up as a beginning of the idea that collecting, madness and sexual desire are linked. Alongside lust for art in the classical world there was also Statue Love, the title of the first chapter here, and both endured – as the defiling of ancient sculpture with lipstick as well as semen bears unpleasant witness. The British sexologist Havelock Ellis coined the term Pygmalionism for this affliction; as if to emphasise the point, the dust jacket of this book is given to Gérôme's *Pygmalion and Galatea*, inspired by Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in which the statue of Galatea turns to living flesh when kissed.

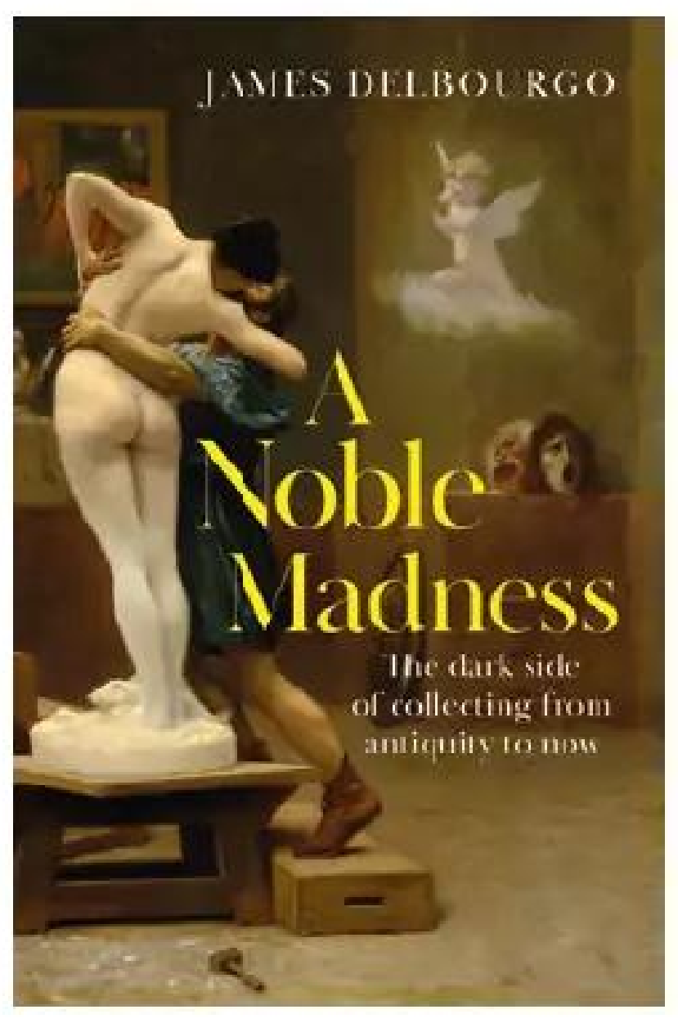
In the ancient world, the pillaging of sacred sites was considered an affront to the gods; the collecting of art associated with the tyrant. In the medieval and modern period, in Asian and Islamic as well as European cultures, the accusing finger pointed instead to the collector as idolator. Despite misgivings about material possessions, however, commentators in Ming dynasty China appear to have been the first to find virtue in the obsessive collector; these noble souls were suffering from a distinguished affliction known as *pǐ*, lauded because it inspired self-sacrifice and an authenticity of self.

Delbourgo's handbrake turns take us next to 16th-century Prague and the court of Rudolf II, that most voracious and notorious of collectors. Magus as well as natural philosopher, he was as profoundly curious about progressive empirical science as alchemy and the esoteric writings of the Christian Kabbalah. His collecting of every conceivable kind of specimen, natural and man-made, may be seen as an attempt to assemble the world in microcosm in order to penetrate its secrets. The ambition of the later collector-naturalists was to impose order itself. Needless to say, such an eccentric ruler as Rudolf was seen by some as in league with the devil, like Christopher Marlowe's anti-hero in *Doctor Faustus*, a melancholic who loses his soul in pursuit of knowledge and power. This notion of the collector as gloomy and reclusive cast another long shadow.

The British collector William Beckford is placed among the 'Libertines and Trinket Queens'; Christina of Sweden, Marie Antoinette, Catherine the Great and Imelda Marcos are cited among the avid collectors accused of pursuing their own pleasure at the expense of their subjects. Bibliomania or book madness is exemplified in the person of the misanthropic Sir Thomas Phillipps, Romantic antiquarianism by the idiosyncratic Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, while Alexander von Humboldt is the quintessential Romantic explorer, combining heroic action with natural philosophy and poetic sensibility. As for Balzac's eponymous hero in *Cousin Pons*, he represents the sad but sympathetic stereotype of the consummate collector-loser looking to find solace in his beloved treasures (which were not the 'almost 2,000 Old Masters' quoted here). *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is cast as another step towards the dominant image of the collector in the 20th century: a '"creepy" closet homosexual and sociopath'.

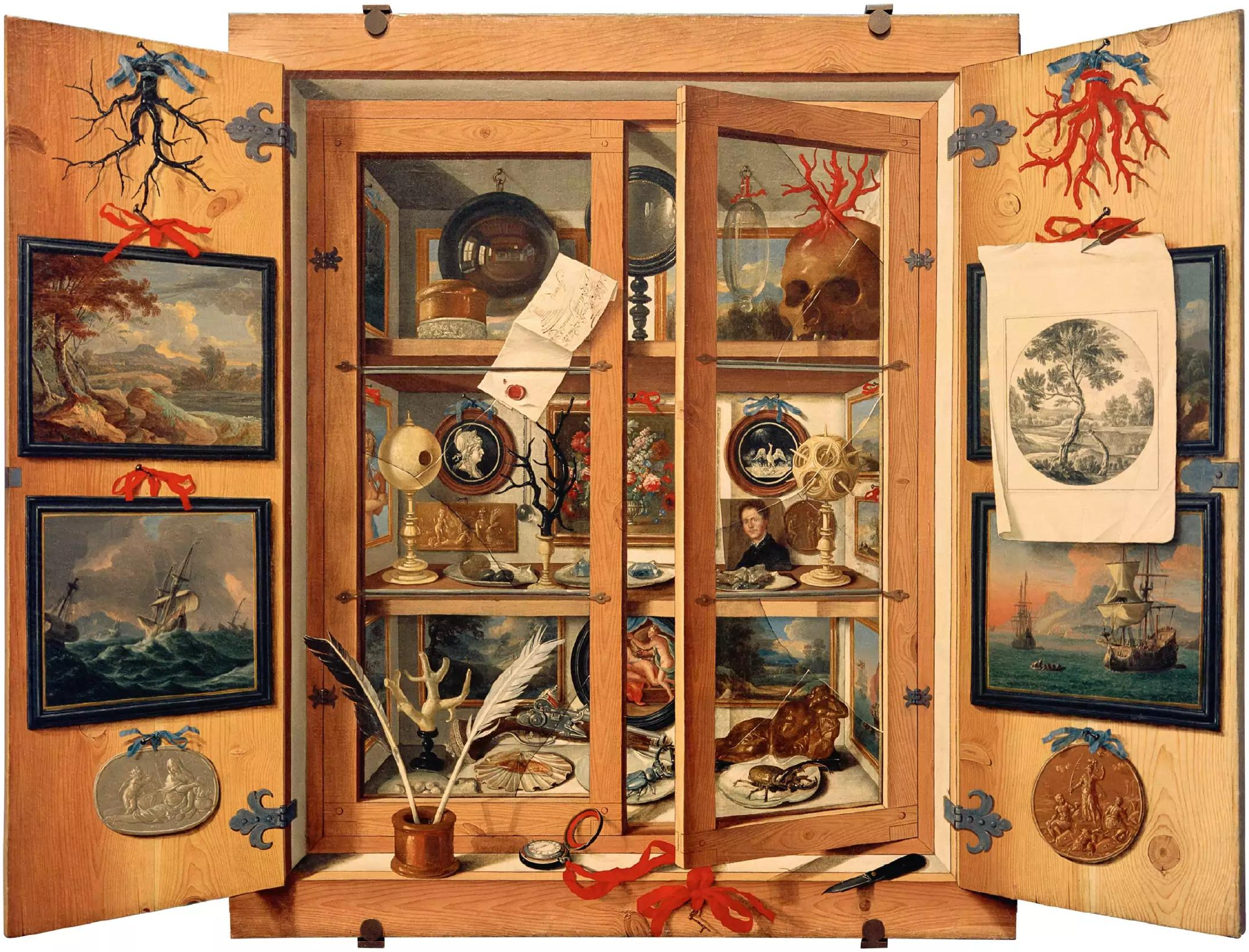
And so Delbourgo's pacy narrative weaves through an age of ambivalence about the plundering of habitats, cultures and monuments to fill the universal, encyclopaedic museum, or the denuding of the great houses of a decadent Europe to adorn the homes of the American 'squillionaire'. In revolutionary China and Russia, the collector becomes an enemy of the people – as he was in France and Germany, if he happened to be Jewish. In Communist Czechoslovakia, Bruce Chatwin's fictional Utz lives through his collection, saving his soul by destroying the porcelain before it falls into the hands of the totalitarian state. We end with the total democratisation of collecting but also of the collectible. Nothing is deemed unworthy of accumulating these days, and HD – hoarding disorder – has become a recognised medical condition.

The cultural and historical range of *A Noble Madness* is impressive. Delbourgo charges down countless rabbit holes, the peculiar charm of this discursive book, although for all its compass there is a sense that much of his manuscript has been cut. Unfamiliar collectors and collections are ripe for discovery, as disparate as David Wilson's Museum of Jurassic Technology in Los Angeles and *ch'aekkŏri*, paintings of 'books and things' – Korean cabinets of curiosities conceived as self-portraits. Inevitably, Delbourgo paints with a broad brush and his sweeping statements do not always bear close scrutiny, but anyone more disposed than this reader to consider Noah, Don Giovanni and Norman Bates as collectors will relish this book.



riverrun, £25
ISBN 9781529424010

Susan Moore is associate editor of Apollo.



Still life with deception ('Scarabattolo'), second half of 17th century, Domenico Remps (1620–1699), oil on canvas, 100 × 137.5cm. Museo dell'Opificio delle Pietre Dure, Florence

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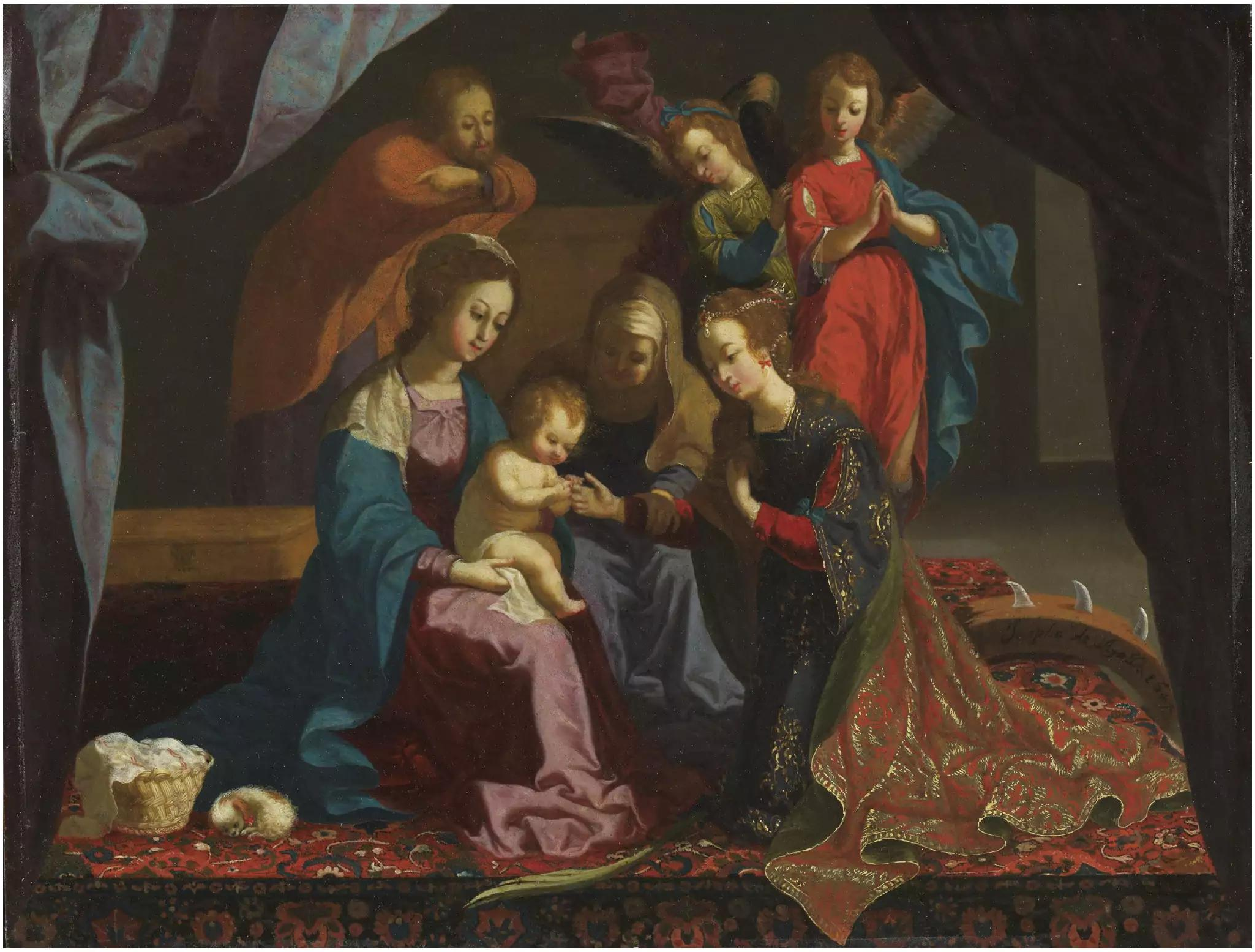


The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine, 1647, Josefa de Óbidos (c. 1630–84), oil on copper, 27.8 × 36.3cm. Nasjonalmuseet, Oslo

REVIEW

Baroque star

Josefa de Óbidos
Carmen Ripollés

DAVID GELBER welcomes a revealing biography of a formidable 17th-century painter

The first surprise provided by Carmen Ripollés's new monograph is that the painter Josefa de Óbidos was born not in the Portuguese town after which she is named, or anywhere else in Portugal for that matter, but in the Spanish city of Seville. In 1630, the year of her birth, Portugal barely existed. Since 1580, the country had been ruled by the kings of Spain and much of its talent – including Josefa's father, the artist Baltazar Gomes Figueira – had drifted across the Guadiana River in the hope of betterment in the trading termini of Andalusia. In Spain, Baltazar helped beat off an English raiding party, hung out with Francisco de Zurbarán and eventually made enough of a reputation for himself as a painter of still lifes and devotional scenes to return with his young family to his native town of Óbidos, some 80km north of Lisbon. It was there that Josefa grew up, learning from her father, and produced much of her work.

The second surprise is that Josefa attained not only renown on the back of her painting, but also substantial wealth. As Ripollés observes, the female artist was not an unknown phenomenon in the 17th century. Josefa, however, was much more than that. In her mid thirties she acquired the status of 'emancipated maiden', which allowed her to enter into contracts independently so long as she remained unmarried. Thereafter she invested the proceeds of her painting in land and property, while also acting as a moneylender. By the time of her death in 1684, she owned a large country estate with vineyards, orchards and cottages, plentiful jewellery, textiles from India, rugs from North Africa and countless other artefacts of empire. In telling the story of how Josefa achieved such riches, Ripollés offers an interesting study of female ingenuity in a male-dominated world.

Some 150 works by Josefa survive. The majority are in the genres – still life and religious painting – that were Baltazar's bread and butter. The works of both father and daughter are characterised by contrasts of light and shade. Yet Josefa did not merely imitate Baltazar's practices. Ripollés believes that portraits formed a significant part of her work too. Only one example has been definitively attributed to Josefa, but anecdotal evidence suggests that she attracted commissions from eminent families, including the Braganzas, descendants of the old royal house of Aviz who wrested the Portuguese crown from the Habsburgs in 1640. One chapter is devoted to Josefa's work on copper, a material, according to Ripollés, that appealed to women artists because it required little preparation or studio space. In this medium she created many small-scale, richly detailed depictions of scenes from the lives of Christ, the Virgin Mary and the saints for noble clients.

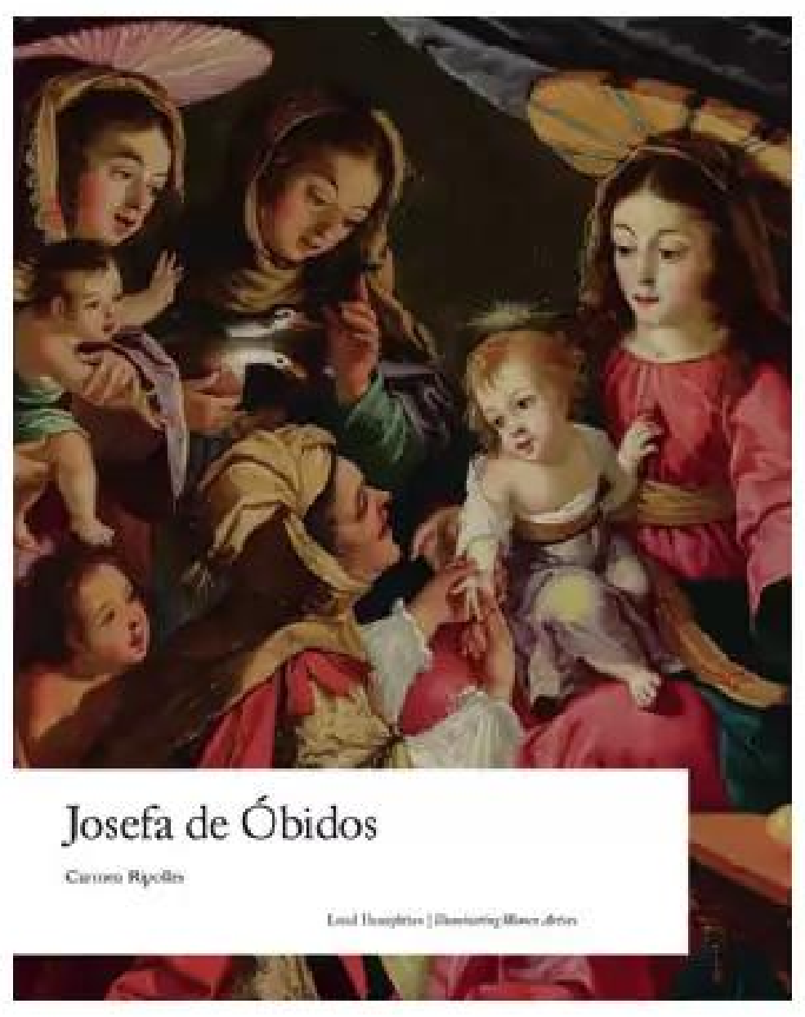
Josefa's other main patrons were monasteries and churches, for which she produced a number of altarpieces, many centred on strong, independent women such as Saint Teresa of Ávila. Ripollés illuminates the strategies women artists such as Josefa used to put their names about. Much, indeed, depended on the name itself. Ripollés shows how Josefa, after experimenting with several denominations early in her career, decided to style herself 'de Óbidos'. This was partly, Ripollés infers, so that she could distinguish herself from her father, but there was another reason too. Historically, Óbidos had formed part of the endowment of the queens of Portugal. After the restoration of the Portuguese monarchy in 1640, Josefa sought to associate herself with both the court and the cause of Portuguese independence by adopting the name of the town. Ripollés also describes how Josefa took care to devise a signature that would suggest to viewers competence in the courtly accomplishment of calligraphy and a level of education above that of a common-or-garden craftswoman.

Josefa struggled with perspective when handling group scenes and characterisation was not one of her strong suits – many of her faces have the pallid spheroidicity of porcelain figurines. For the Portuguese writer Miguel Torga, the baby Jesus in Josefa's hands became indistinguishable from an 'egg roll'. She excelled, however, in the depiction of clothes and fabrics, an achievement Ripollés links to the instruction in needlework that early modern girls typically received.

Although the majority of Josefa's paintings depict religious themes, Ripollés offers a bracingly materialist analysis of her art, drawing attention to the ways in which it showcased the commodities, many imported from Asia, that she and her clients relished. In *The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine* (1647), the titular martyr, clad in an elaborate brocade dress adorned with rubies, bows and pearls, kneels on a Persian-style rug overlooked by angels garbed in silk. Sumptuous fabrics fill *Reading the Fortune of the Christ Child* (1667), where something resembling a Japanese bangasa serves as a halo for the Virgin Mary. Ripollés connects a piece of jewellery depicted in *The Virgin and Saint Joseph Giving a Necklace to Saint Teresa* (1672) to an item listed in an inventory of Josefa's belongings.

Consumption lies at the heart of the still lifes too. Josefa's father introduced the genre to Portugal; Ripollés detects in the work of both Baltazar and Josefa a patriotic purpose as well as a desire to reflect the tastes of the circles in which they moved. In *Still Life with Cheese and Cherries* (*c.* 1670) and *Still Life with Sweets and Pottery* (1676), for instance, Josefa used a restrained palette of reds, yellows and browns to vaunt local delicacies and celebrate the prosperity that renewed independence had brought Portugal.

The research that has gone into this extensively illustrated book is excellent, but one cannot garland the prose with similar praise. The writing is often indifferent and sometimes worse, jellifying into statements that defy elucidation: 'here Josefa capitalizes on the possibilities of copper as a support that allows her to enhance visual meaning'. If, like Josefa's patrons, readers are prepared to live with a certain unevenness, they will find much of interest here about a formidable woman.



Lund Humphries, £35
ISBN 9781848224872

David Gelber is a writer and editor.

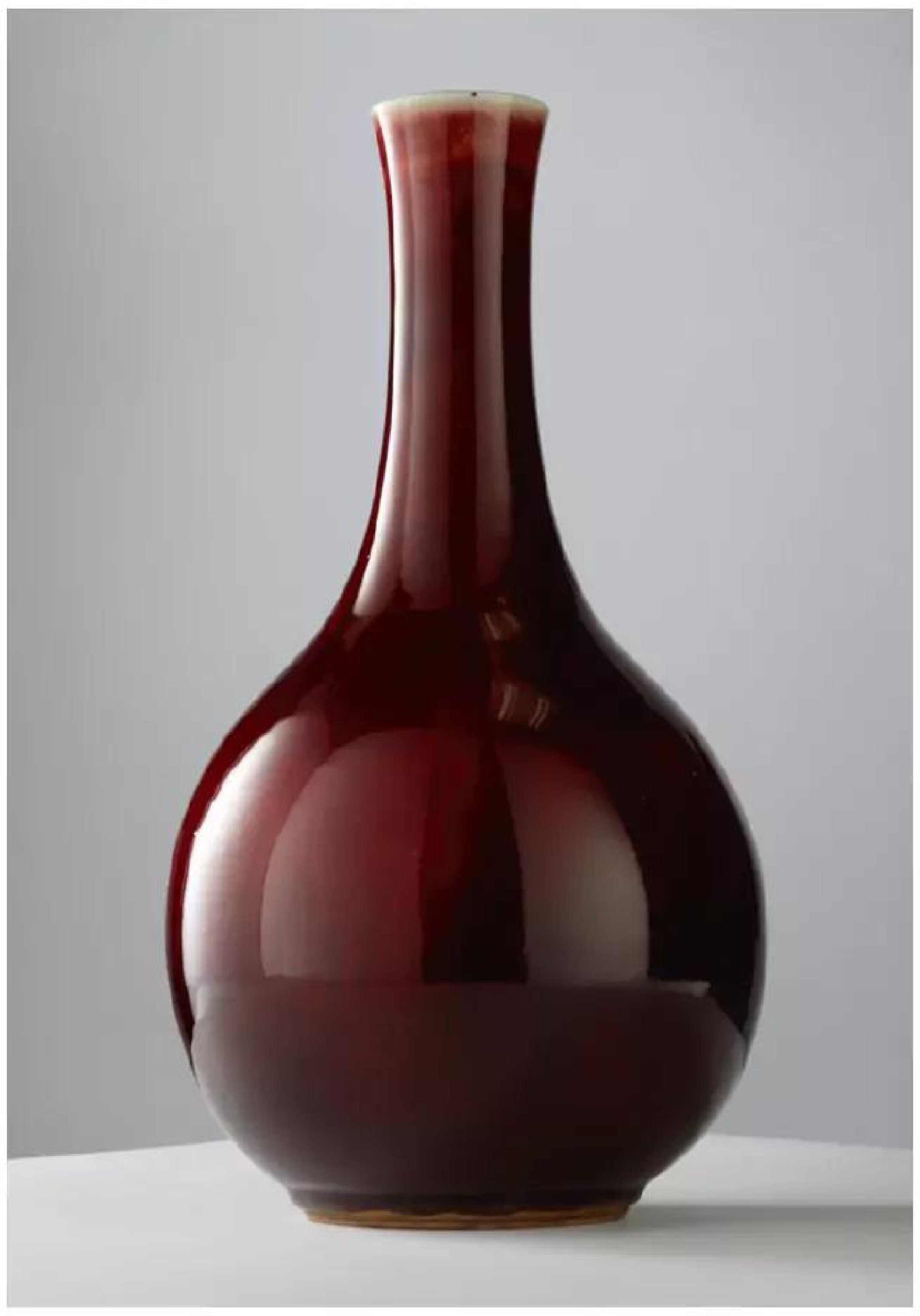
Simply red

J.P. Morgan is not known today for collecting Asian art, but this elegant Qing vase was one of his most prized possessions, writes **JEAN STROUSE**

Of all the treasures in New York's Morgan Library and Museum, one draws me in with singular force. A deep, gleaming red, it seems at once to contain and reflect light, like a jewel. Unlike a jewel, it stands 40cm high. With a long narrow neck and wider curving body, it is a Chinese porcelain bottle vase that dates from the Kangxi reign (1662–1722) of the Qing dynasty and is now called the Morgan Ruby. Its placement on a plinth near a floor-to-ceiling window affords 360-degree views of its flawless surface and intense colour in natural light. The monochrome copper-oxide glaze, which is notoriously hard to control, has to be fired in wood-burning kilns, with reduced oxygen, at extremely high temperatures. The Chinese describe the colour as *langyaohong* ('official-kiln red'); some Western experts call it oxblood (*sang de boeuf*).

I spent many years at the Morgan Library doing research for a biography of its founder, the banker J. Pierpont Morgan, which was published in 1999. The library is an august, intimidating place, with celebrated holdings that include ancient Babylonian cylinder seals, Egyptian papyrus rolls, Gutenberg Bibles, Old Master drawings, rare prints, letters written by Jane Austen and manuscripts by Mark Twain. During those years I never noticed the ruby vase; it had been set on a shelf against red damask walls in a dim corner of Morgan's study, virtually invisible. It moved around as the campus went through extensive renovations in the early 21st century, ending up in storage. Not until 2016 did it secure a place in full public view, just off the glass-walled central court of the renamed Morgan Library and Museum.

In its elegant simplicity, the vase differs from most of what appealed to Morgan. Along with objects for his library, he was indefatigably acquiring Old Master paintings, tapestries, sculpture, Renaissance bronzes, watches, armour, ivories, portrait miniatures, elaborate metalwork and a great deal more. He defined the voracious eclecticism of the Gilded Age. His wife, who did not share his passion for art, once said he would buy anything from a pyramid to Mary Magdalene's tooth. He did own a northern Italian reliquary said to contain a molar from the Magdalene's jaw. After he died, it went to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, along with about 7,000 other items from his collections. The quality of what he purchased, even given that broad range, was extremely high. Several curators say that 'ex-Morgan' objects rise like cream to the tops of their collections.



Bottle vase, 'The Morgan Ruby', Qing dynasty, Kangxi period (1662–1722), China, porcelain, high-fired copper-red glaze, ht 40cm. Morgan Library and Museum, New York

Neither introspective nor articulate, Morgan never explained what he did in finance or as a collector. He was, as Henry Adams said of Theodore Roosevelt, 'pure act'. Testifying in 1912 before a Congressional committee out to prove that he had a stranglehold on the US economy, he answered a question about why he and two colleagues had bought a life insurance company by saying simply, 'I thought it was the thing to do.'

Although Morgan is no longer associated with Asian art, he acquired outstanding products of Chinese culture, both for himself and for the Met. He was a trustee of the museum in 1902 when the extraordinary Garland Collection of more than a thousand Chinese porcelains, which had been on loan there since 1895, was about to be withdrawn and possibly sold. Morgan bought them all for a reputed $600,000 (equivalent to around $23m today), left them at the museum and had the dealer Henry Duveen fill out incomplete sequences for another $200,000.

For his own house and library, he assembled another extensive collection of Chinese masterpieces. The ruby vase, which he purchased from a dealer in 1907, had formerly been in an imperial palace. He kept it on view near his desk in what was then his private library. A few years later, after a republican revolution in China ended nearly 4,000 years of dynastic rule, the imperial family offered, through intermediaries, to sell Morgan its entire palace collection, said to be valued at $5 million. At least one powerful Chinese republican statesman objected, and, in any case, Morgan was dying and probably never learned of this extraordinary offer.

After Morgan's death in 1913, his son sold off many of the most important items from the collections, including the former Garland ceramics for $3.9m. Their value had quintupled in a decade, partly because of the sharp rise of Western interest in Chinese art and partly the imprimatur of Morgan's name. Morgan junior also sold the Chinese porcelains that his father had bought for himself – all except one: the dazzling ruby vase.

Jean Strouse's most recent book is Family Romance: John Singer Sargent and the Wertheimers *(Farrar, Straus and Giroux/Manchester University Press).*

In the next issue: The Studio Museum in Harlem reopens, the earthy art of John Constable, interwar artists versus fascism, fancy swords from Lucknow, and a preview of Asian Art in London

Photo: Graham S. Haber; © Morgan Library and Museum | US Subscriptions Apollo (ISSN 0003-6536, PE 24133) is published eleven times a year in Jan, Feb, March, April, May, June, combined Jul/Aug, Sept, Oct, Nov and Dec by The Spectator (1828) Ltd, 22 Old Queen Street, London SW1H 9HP, United Kingdom. Airfreight and mailing in the USA by agent named World Container Inc., c/o BBT 150- 15, 183rd St, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY 11256. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Apollo, World Container Inc., c/o BBT 150-15, 183rd St, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA.

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